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Police seek killer with a grudge linked to television programme

Jill Dando died from bullet in the head

By ADRIAN LEE, MICHAEL HARVEY AND DOMINIC KENNEDY

POLICE hunting the killer of the television presenter Jill Dando were last night examining hundreds of cases she dealt with on *Crimewatch UK* in the belief that she was murdered by someone with a grudge against the programme.

Miss Dando, who was 38, was shot dead in broad daylight on the doorstep of her £400,000 terrace home in Fulham, west London, at about 11.30 yesterday morning. Police said last night that she had suffered a single gunshot wound to her head.

Her next-door neighbour Richard Hughes, a financial trader, said he heard her car returning home, the blip of its alarm activating and, 40

seconds later, a scream. "It was more of a surprise scream as if she had turned round and seen somebody," he said.

He then watched as a well-dressed man in his 30s walked calmly away from the scene in the direction of the River Thames. The man was white, clean shaven and well-groomed and was carrying a mobile phone. "He was as cool as a cucumber. I thought it could have been a friend," Mr Hughes said.

By the time he and two other neighbours reached Miss Dando she was unconscious in the doorway of her three-bedroom house on Gowan Avenue. The door was closed and it looked as if she had slumped against it.

"There was blood everywhere. She

did not appear to be breathing," Mr Hughes added. "There was blood coming from what appeared to be a wound behind her ear and running down her neck."

Two paramedic teams and a helicopter crew were sent to the scene. They found her suffering from serious head injuries and spent several minutes trying to save her life there. She was then taken to Charing Cross Hospital, three minutes away, where she was certified dead at 1.03pm.

Her fiancé Alan Farthing was called from his gynaecology clinic at St Mary's Hospital, Paddington, to be asked to identify the body.

Two others who went to her aid had been involved in a coffee morning just down the street for young mothers with toddlers. Charlene de Rosney said a friend arrived at her home and told them she had seen a woman slumped in the doorway of number 29. Two of the women quickly went to the scene and called an ambulance. They described Miss Dando as looking blue and lifeless. "They said she was ashen, they didn't come back for 45 minutes and that's when I knew it must be serious," Ms de Rosney said. "I am just so shocked and I feel edgy now. Jill Dando was just very pleasant to everybody."

Miss Dando's death brought tributes from the Queen, the Prime Minister, celebrities and colleagues. Within hours, hundreds of viewers had signed an on-line book of remembrance. The Queen said that she was shocked and saddened by the murder and Tony Blair, who was told of the killing while preparing his Commons statement on the Nato summit, paid tribute to a "hugely talented" public figure.

Last year it was reported that an admirer put a note through Miss Dando's front door after she was pictured in a magazine with Mr Farthing, a consultant gynaecologist whom she met on a blind date. They were planning to marry in September. John Hols, a 62-year-old bachelor, admitted that he had been accused of harassing Miss Dando, but said it was a "bit unfair". He had sent Valentine cards and waited for her outside the BBC studios, but had stopped contacting her after seeing the photograph.

The BBC director of television Alan Yentob said he had been informed about her security concerns. "Of course we were concerned about her

safety. We did hear the story about the stalker. We live in that kind of dangerous and unpredictable world. She was a professional broadcaster and she had to get on with it, clearly this left her exposed as well."

An emotional Nick Ross, who presented *Crimewatch UK* with her, said: "The paradox is that we used to say on *Crimewatch* that a crime like this is very rare. In fact, maybe it's not a paradox - it's his life like lightning, like a bolt out of the blue, it's astonishing, it really is astonishing. She was irritated from time to time, there



Jill Dando, who died of a single gunshot wound to the head outside her Fulham home yesterday

had been somebody stalking her, but to be honest that really goes with the turt and I don't think there has been a time, certainly that she ever confided in me, where anything untoward like this or even remotely like this seems possible."

Detectives said that they would be looking at the hundreds of cases Miss Dando dealt with on the programme in case someone with a grudge was responsible for the killing.

Last night her brother, Nigel Dando, said the family had last met over the Easter weekend when she

brought Dr Farthing to discuss details for their summer wedding. "Jill was so looking forward to that and was on top form. She was a devoted daughter and a loving sister and we shall miss her. People who knew her through her television work will miss her. Her roots were still in Weston. She did charity work there and still loved it here." Her 81-year-old father, Jack, was too upset to say anything.

Miss Dando had intended to slow

Continued on page 2, col 5

ELEANOR BENTLEY

Dissenting voice seen as proof of split in Belgrade

By PHILIP WEBSTER, POLITICAL EDITOR

TONY Blair and other Nato leaders seized on the first signs of a serious rift in Belgrade yesterday after the Yugoslav Deputy Prime Minister called on the regime to stop lying to the people.

George Robertson, the Defence Secretary, said that President Milosevic's regime was beginning to crack under the united pressure of the alliance and that an interview given by Vuk Draskovic "blew a hole in the facade of Belgrade unity".

Mr Draskovic, who has a reputation as a maverick, told the local Studio B television: "People who lead this country must say clearly where we stand. They must say what will be left of Serbia in 20 days if the bombing continues."

"The people should be told that Nato is not facing a breakdown, that Russia will not help Yugoslavia militarily and that the world's public opinion is against us."

Downing Street said a split was emerging and that there was clearly "outright dissent at the heart of Milosevic's regime".

Mr Blair said that many within the Belgrade Government and army were concerned at what Mr Milosevic had done to his country. "He has bankrupted it, its entire infrastructure is now being dismantled and he has become a complete pariah in his own region," Mr Draskovic's words were a clear indication of those strains, he added.

Nato said that Belgrade was beginning to realise the seriousness of its situation. Jamie Shea, the alliance spokesman, said in Washington that Mr Draskovic, formerly the leader of the Serbian opposition,

was "no friend of Nato" and had in the past espoused Serb nationalism.

"The statements that he made last night show that there are senior members of the Yugoslav Government that are beginning to recognise the reality of the situation Yugoslavia is in," he said.

In an upbeat statement on the Nato summit in Washington over the weekend, Mr Blair told MPs that there had been total and unified commitment by all members of the alliance to defeat and reverse the

INSIDE

'Our Government continues to behave with an ambiguity that is taking me all my self-control not to link directly with political fear of xenophobic daubers and letter-writers'

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policy of ethnic cleansing in Kosovo. "Each leader began his statement by saying Nato will and must prevail. It is our collective task now to make that victory, of justice over evil, a reality for Kosovo's long-suffering people."

But he also made plain that the use of ground forces before a peace settlement remained on the agenda. He repeated the formula that President Milosevic had no veto over Nato's actions and emphasised several times that forces were being built up in the region.

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Building society windfall

By SUSAN EMMETT

MORE than three million members of Bradford & Bingley Building Society are set to receive a windfall of up to £1,000 each after members voted in favour of the society's conversion to a bank.

The result represents a resounding defeat for the board, which ran a £5 million campaign against conversion. A majority of 62 per cent voted in favour of abandoning the society's mutual status to become a bank with a stock market listing.

But savers and borrowers will have to wait at least another year before receiving their windfalls. The decision by Bradford & Bingley members is likely to spark a new round of so-called carpetbagging by speculators seeking to open accounts at other mutual building societies that might floor on the stock market.

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A shaken 007 stirs the Scots to rescue SNP

Gillian Harris on Sean Connery's political debut

SEAN CONNERY'S role yesterday was not to save a country, capitalism or even a girl but a flagging election campaign that has run out of steam.

Connery is 68, long past the age when, as 007, he used to outwit the world's deadliest villains and save democracy for HMG.

But yesterday he was back on duty, called out of retirement by the Scottish National Party to confront a challenge almost as grave as those he used to face at the hands of Goldfinger or Dr No.

The SNP, adrift by 14 points in the opinion polls, is in trouble. Its campaign seems dead in the water, its arch-opponents, Labour, are heading for a seemingly unstoppable victory on May 6.



"If Bond can destroy Goldfinger, Blofeld and Smersh, surely he can see off Donald Dewar?"

and crooked grin, to take centre stage and save the nation for independence. He made his move at a rally in Edinburgh where the invit-

ed audience of 300 SNP activists gave him a rapturous reception as he stroled to the podium wearing a grey suit and maroon tie.

Connery put on his glasses, cleared his throat and began to speak. "Fellow members of the SNP," he said in his distinctive accent and was immediately drowned out by cheers.

His four-minute speech, which he had written himself, set out a vision for Scotland's future.

"Whatever I have done or attempted to do for Scotland has always been for her and not for my own benefit. I defy anyone to prove otherwise. My position on Scotland has never changed in 30-odd years. Scotland should be nothing less than equal with all the other nations of the world."

Connery spoke of the referendum. Continued on page 7, col 1

The final pages of books offer

By HANNAH BETTS

MORE than one hundred million tokens have been redeemed by schools through The Times, and organisers are bracing themselves for a deluge of millions more.

The final token in the Free Books for Schools offer will be printed on Friday, leaving just three days for schools to add to their totals. However, that still means that several million tokens will be available in *The Times*, *The Sun* and on packs of Walkers snack-foods, so schools can add to the half a million new books already ordered.

Wednesbury Oak Primary School in Tipton, West Midlands has redeemed the most tokens so far with 104,621, and *Biz*, a collection of Second World War stories by Robert Westall is the most frequently requested title.

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AXS

Parliament takes lead in tributes

By Dominic Kennedy

THE Prime Minister led tributes to Jill Dando by colleagues, celebrities and politicians. Tony Blair was told of her murder as he prepared his Commons statement on the Nato summit.

A spokesman for Mr Blair said: "He was deeply shocked. He had met her both professionally and socially at Downing Street and, in common with many people, he found her totally charming and highly talented. He thinks it appalling that anybody could do such a thing."

Her killing was raised in the Commons by Sir Norman Fowler, the Shadow Home Secretary. He said: "On behalf of the Opposition, can I say that we have all been appalled to hear the news of the murder of Jill Dando?"

MPs murmured agreement as he continued: "She was someone I knew and admired and she did a vast amount to combat crime, there is no question of that. It's an horrific murder and a terrible loss."

The Home Secretary, Jack Straw, said: "May I associate myself and the Government with your remarks? Jill Dando was someone who was known to virtually everybody in this country, if not personally. She was someone who was at the height of her powers."

"She had done a huge amount personally in the fight against crime by her role not least in *Crimewatch UK*, and therefore this makes her death all the more poignant."

"I'm sure I speak for the whole House when I say that



Nick Ross at BBC Television Centre yesterday

our deepest sympathy goes to her loved ones, her family and her friends at this terrible, tragic and appalling loss."

The BBC Director-General, Sir John Birt, said: "This is devastating news. Jill was loved by her audiences and by everyone who worked with her at the BBC. Jill's public and private persona were one and the same. She was modest and lacking in self-regard, a popular member of any team and never a prima donna. Jill will be forever remembered for her sweet, unaffected elegance."

Jennie Bond, the news presenter, said: "The more popular she was, the more ordinary she was with us. She was a very happy person and never happier than in recent months, when she had met her fiancé and was making plans to get married."

"Away from her career on screen, she also helped out a number of charities."

Leslie Fiske, chairman of Weston Hospicecare, said: "I have known her come down

Federation. Fred Broughton, said: "We are deeply upset. It is a cruel irony that someone who cared so much for the victims of crime should be killed in this tragic way. Jill was a great supporter of the police service, a compassionate and caring person, and she will be sadly missed."

Nicholas Wytchell, who was her co-presenter on *BBC Breakfast News* for five years, said: "Jill was always a down-to-earth person, which is not always the case with people who have achieved the kind of spectacular and deserved success she had."

The Sky presenter David Fitzgerald, who was a friend, said: "She was a lovely woman, and what you saw was what you got."

Keith Betton, head of corporate affairs at the Association of British Travel Agents and a close friend of Miss Dando, said: "We are all terribly shocked that this has happened. It's even more tragic that it has happened just when she had found the person she wanted to settle down with."

The Conservative leader, William Hague, said: "I am shocked and horrified by this senseless and brutal murder."

The Liberal Democrat leader, Paddy Ashdown, said: "It is a terrible irony that, after all her work defending the victims of crime and help in pursuing criminals, she should fall victim herself to a horrific crime."

A spokesman for Prince Edward's fiancée, Sophie Rhys-Jones, a friend of Miss Dando, said she was "deeply shocked and upset".



Jill Dando and her fiancé Alan Farthing, a consultant, earlier this year

Tough laws try to curb threat to women

By Richard Ford
HOME CORRESPONDENT

JILL DANDO was yet another celebrity victim of the attentions of a stalker. Obsessive stalking is increasingly part of the cost of fame.

Members of the Royal Family, notably the Princess Royal and Diana, Princess of Wales, have been victims. So, too, has the singer Madonna, the actress Kate Winslet and the TV weatherman Bill Giles.

But it was the trauma suffered by women far from the public eye that forced Parliament to introduce an anti-stalking law two years ago.

The move reflected the changing perception of stalking as women's groups and the charity Victim Support pressed MPs to recognise it as a serious threat.

The case of Tracy Sant, who was subjected to a three-year campaign of terror during which her stalker repeatedly broke injunctions and bail conditions not to approach her, showed how existing legislation had let her down.

Her stalker, Anthony Burrows, was jailed for three years in 1996 after he became the first stalker to be convicted of assault occasioning grievous bodily harm.

By then both the Conservative and Labour parties were agreed that the existing criminal law was ineffective. Prosecutors were arguing that the stress caused by relentless stalking amounted to actual or grievous bodily harm but the problem was proving that the stalker intended his victim harm, the key part of the offence.

The new law, the Protection from Harassment Act, created two new criminal offences to deal with stalking, which was deliberately left undefined, and a new civil offence of molestation.

Under the Act, which came into force in June 1997, it is a criminal offence "to use words or behaviour, on more than one occasion, which would put the victim in fear of violence, either intentionally or in circumstances where a reasonable person would have realised this would be the effect".

The maximum penalty is five years in jail and/or an unlimited fine. It is also a criminal offence to use words or behaviour on more than one occasion which could "cause the victim to be harassed, alarmed or distressed, either intentionally or in circumstances where a reasonable person would have realised this would be the effect".

The maximum penalty is six months in jail and/or a £5,000 fine. A restraining order is also available by an injunction where words or behaviour are used which cause the victim distress. A breach is a criminal offence with a penalty of five years in prison and/or an unlimited fine.

'Girl next door with gravitas' was perfect presenter

Presenter was the embodiment of polite middle England, reports Carol Midgley

IN Jill Dando, the BBC had found the prototype of its near-perfect television presenter.

Attractive but not intimidatingly beautiful, well-spoken but not "snoopy", friendly but with a calm air of authority, she was the very embodiment of polite Middle England. Viewers warmed to her because she had no airs and graces. BBC executives valued her because she was so adaptable.

Few presenters could combine presenting programmes as disparate as *Holiday*, *Crimewatch* and

the *Six O'Clock News*, and appear naturally suited to all of them. Her shows had consistently good ratings. Jill Dando personified the special ingredient which BBC policymakers covet: presenters with the ability to retain gravitas while coming over to the viewer as the girl next door.

It is part of the BBC's stated policy, after months of audience research, to secure more personalities

from just her mould. However, if there was a flaw in Miss Dando's make-up, it was that some considered her association with a holiday programme made her too "show-business" to be a full-time newsreader.

It was this which cost her the job earlier this year as chief anchor for the new *Six O'Clock News*, to be relaunched next month.

Some BBC executives thought

she was the perfect face to draw a wider audience to serious news and current affairs. Others, however, argued that she was too lightweight and would not create the right impression for its key news programme.

As the debate was raging in the press, Dando, with typical serenity, announced that she did not wish her future career to be the subject of BBC leaks and gossip and with-

drew her name from the running.

Instead, she signed up for a number of new projects with BBC1 controller, Peter Salmon, that were still being discussed. The *Six O'Clock News* job went to Huw Edwards, a former political correspondent for the BBC.

"Jill was quintessentially BBC. She had a very British, very reassuring television presence," said a colleague. "She was a dream to work

with. A lot of people in her position can behave like real prima donnas about things, but she was always very down to earth."

Some described Miss Dando as bland because of her clean-cut image. But television executives believed the fact that she did not have an overbearing personality was one of the things viewers liked best.

There are few women broadcasters around who can claim blonde appeal without the label of "bimbo". As the BBC will find, no doubt, when it tries to replace her.

Stalker tells of his shock at 'great loss'

By Adam Sherwin

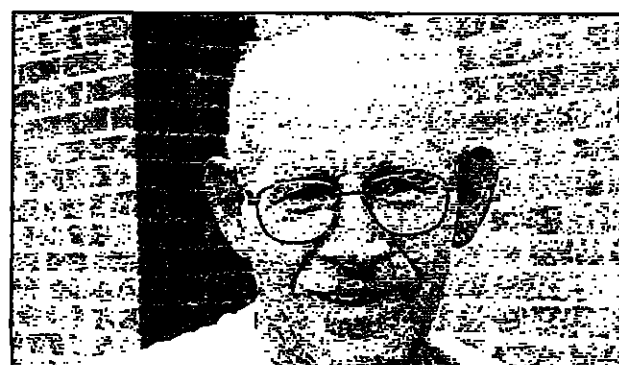
THE man who stalked Jill Dando for four years expressed shock at her murder. John Hole, a retired civil servant in his 60s, from Kent, admitted bombarding the presenter with telephone calls and visits to her home on several occasions.

Speaking outside his home, Mr Hole said: "I am shocked to hear the circumstances surrounding her death. I can't understand why anyone would want to display violence towards this woman. I think it was a great loss."

Mr Hole said the first he heard of the murder was when a reporter called his home. Mr Hole said: "Someone called, but I thought it was a try-on. I am very sorry it happened. I know no more than that. I want to be left alone. She was a marvellous presenter, very good at her job."

Mr Hole said he had not bothered Miss Dando for more than a year. He said: "As far as I'm concerned, my involvement with Jill Dando was over when an article was published last year about her new romance. I haven't spoken to her since then."

Mr Hole spoke after cycling back to his £100,000 home in Willesborough, Kent. He



John Hole: he stalked Miss Dando for four years

added: "I won't be sending flowers to her funeral. We weren't that close."

Neighbours have described Mr Hole as a loner and he has admitted an obsession with the presenter last year when BBC security officers sent him a letter, ordering him to stop harassing her.

Mr Hole has said of his targeting of Miss Dando: "I have never made any death threats. I've never threatened her with violence."

During the four years he spent harassing Miss Dando, he admitted waiting outside her home and the BBC studios. He said: "I found out by perfectly legal means where she lived and knocked on the door. I've been about three

times but there was no answer."

Mr Hole, who is not married and said he had no steady relationships, said: "I started off sending a Valentine's card. Then I wrote, asking to meet her. I just wanted to get to know her and I would have liked to have gone out with her. Sometimes you are attracted to certain people you like to think you are chasing after. Unfortunately for Jill, she fell within my sights."

Miss Dando played down the harassment, but asked BBC officials to warn Mr Hole to cease his attentions. Mr Hole said he had complied. He said: "I have got to stop what I'm doing or face the consequences."

Dando died from bullet in head

Continued from page 1

down in the run-up to her autumn wedding, but even taking it easy brought fresh publicity for the presenter.

During her last days, the *Crimewatch UK* and *Holiday* star continued to bask in the limelight and sparkle in private. Miss Dando even made her Page 3 debut when a raunchy photo-shoot for the cover of *Radio Times* was picked up and used by newspapers last Tuesday.

That night she returned to a better-known role, presenting this month's edition of *Crimewatch UK*, which included an appeal for information about the Brixton nail bombing.

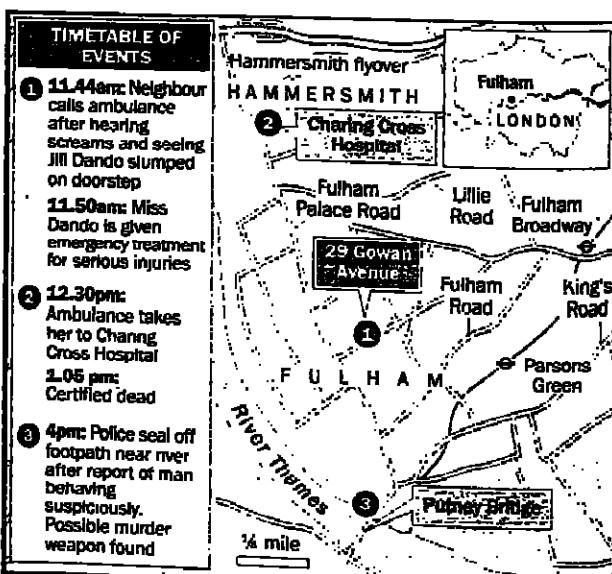
But the picture of leather-clad Miss Dando stood in

front of an Aston Martin is still in thousands of homes promoting the new series *Antiques Inspectors*, screened for the first time on Sunday night.

Having spent Saturday night at a Royal British Legion dinner in the Natural History Museum — where she danced with friend Lord Archer — Miss Dando opted for a quiet night in as the show aired.

The congratulatory phone call from her future father-in-law John Farthing that followed was among the last conversations she had.

Retired doctor Mr Farthing and his wife, from Highcliffe, Dorset, praised Miss Dando's performance before discussing plans for her wedding to their son.



Polic

Somers mourns fa

No rest for

ILL DANDO was yet another celebrity victim of the attentions of a stalker. Obsessive stalking is increasingly part of the cost of fame. Members of the Royal Family, notably the Princess Royal and Diana, Princess of Wales, have been victims. So, too, has the singer Madonna, the actress Kate Winslet and the TV weatherman Bill Giles. But it was the trauma suffered by women far from the public eye that forced Parliament to introduce an anti-stalking law two years ago. The move reflected the changing perception of stalking as women's groups and the charity Victim Support pressed MPs to recognise it as a serious threat. The case of Tracy Sant, who was subjected to a three-year campaign of terror during which her stalker repeatedly broke injunctions and bail conditions not to approach her, showed how existing legislation had let her down. Her stalker, Anthony Burrows, was jailed for three years in 1996 after he became the first stalker to be convicted of assault occasioning grievous bodily harm. By then both the Conservative and Labour parties were agreed that the existing criminal law was ineffective. Prosecutors were arguing that the stress caused by relentless stalking amounted to actual or grievous bodily harm but the problem was proving that the stalker intended his victim harm, the key part of the offence. The new law, the Protection from Harassment Act, created two new criminal offences to deal with stalking, which was deliberately left undefined, and a new civil offence of molestation. Under the Act, which came into force in June 1997, it is a criminal offence "to use words or behaviour, on more than one occasion, which would put the victim in fear of violence, either intentionally or in circumstances where a reasonable person would have realised this would be the effect". The maximum penalty is five years in jail and/or an unlimited fine. It is also a criminal offence to use words or behaviour on more than one occasion which could "cause the victim to be harassed, alarmed or distressed, either intentionally or in circumstances where a reasonable person would have realised this would be the effect". The maximum penalty is six months in jail and/or a £5,000 fine. A restraining order is also available by an injunction where words or behaviour are used which cause the victim distress. A breach is a criminal offence with a penalty of five years in prison and/or an unlimited fine.

Police seek Crimewatch clues

Detectives sift through cases from television series in search for clues to killer, writes Adam Fresco

DETECTIVES yesterday began sifting through the hundreds of cases featured on *Crimewatch UK* while presented by Jill Dando looking for possible links with her murder.

Colleagues from the show yesterday expressed fears that the killing was linked to the show and may have been a revenge attack from one of the people she helped to bring to justice.

As the BBC tried to come to terms with the murder, executives said they would be looking at the issue of security for their presenters to see if it needed to be tighter.

At present Miss Dando, as with all presenters, would have been driven to and from her home to the studios in West London. Apart from that there was thought to be no need to offer her or any other presenter any extra protection.

Last year Miss Dando was stalked by an obsessive fan but did not think he was a threat. She spoke to Nick Ross, her co-presenter, about the problem. He said: "But only in the sense of being an irritant. She hadn't mentioned anything that might cause her anxiety."

"She certainly never said to me that she was frightened or fearful, that something terrible could come of this."

Mr Ross said yesterday that when told of her death he wondered if it could be linked to their series which she began working on in 1995.

Mr Ross, who described the presenter as "enormously popular" among her BBC colleagues, said: "One of the first things that ran through my mind was if it could possibly be connected with *Crimewatch*."

"But we don't go around shooting the barriers, the police or the judges in this country — let alone television presenters. I can only imagine it must have been someone completely deranged. Jill was not the sort of person to attract any enemies. That is why it is so appalling."

Jill Dando described herself as having "the girl-next-door demeanour that some people like and which others find a

turnoff. I'm not a sex symbol and I'm not telly totty so I don't know what the appeal is."

Dismayed at how some in the BBC hierarchy privately dismissed her as "Miss Blandy", she said: "Just because I've got blonde hair and haven't been to Bosnia doesn't mean I'm a bimbo."

Her breakthrough to the national network came in 1988 when aged 26 she was asked to join BBC's *Breakfast Time*, filling in for women presenters on maternity leave. "It was the county girl coming to the big city and I was overawed," she said.

Some critics dismissed her as prim but the many male admirers in her audience disagreed, among them senior BBC executives who in memos praised her "concealed, docile sexiness".

While the tabloids began to pester her for details of her private life she carefully concealed her affair with her boss at *Breakfast Time*, Bob Wheaton.

When she was later asked if she wanted to present *Crimewatch*, she confessed to having doubts whether to present the police series, asking Nick Ross whether he had ever been threatened. "I was aware this job could mean I was putting myself in the firing line."

She had a sheltered upbringing by over-protective parents who feared for her after she underwent life saving heart surgery as a toddler. Born with a hole in the heart doctors at the Bristol Royal Infirmary told her parents when she was three they couldn't wait any longer to operate or she would die.

Her death has forced the BBC into a review of security. Alan Yentob, Director of Television for the BBC, said: "Clearly the security of presenters is something we will want to look at."

A spokesman added: "Presenters of *Crimewatch* had a higher awareness of crime and security because of the nature of what they did but you cannot legislate in advance for a moment of madness."

"People who present news are public figures and it would



The high-profile faces of Jill Dando, from her new BBC antiques series, top, to presenting the *Holiday* programme, *Crimewatch UK*, and the *Six O'Clock News*

be impossible to guard every television presenter day and night. We will look at the circumstances of her death and if it turns out it was linked to her career as a presenter it is something we would want to examine."

The *Crimewatch* programme has featured more than 1,700 cases leading to more than 600 arrests. The monthly show's one in three success rate is considerably

better than the national average clear-up rate of 26 per cent.

The murders of Linda Russell and her daughter Megan were undoubtedly the highest-profile appeal made while she was fronting the show.

Two *Crimewatch* reconstructions of the savage hammer attack in Kent produced more than 600 calls — including one that led police to Michael Stone. Last October Stone was

jailed for life for murdering the mother and daughter and battering Josie to within inches of her life.

In her last *Crimewatch* programme on Tuesday she appealed for information on a man molesting children in Essex, highlighted the death of a Swedish tourist who was pulled from a bus and an armed robbery in Cheltenham where a quantity of valuables and money was taken.

Car-jackers operating in north London and a bag-snatcher who dragged a Swedish tourist to her death were also in her and co-host Nick Ross's sights last week.

A spokeswoman for the programme said yesterday the items had generated a "good response" but police had not reported any arrests.

Her new series, *Antiques Inspectors*, where a team looks in garden sheds and garages

for antiques, started on Sunday but the BBC is undecided whether to show the rest of the series, which has already been recorded.

Roger Cook, the investigative television reporter, has received many death threats over the years he has been exposing crooks and often has at least two bodyguards with him when out filming.

Mr Cook, 55, has suffered 21 attacks and was threatened at

gunpoint four times during the 12-year series. Central, which makes the series *The Cook Report*, refused to comment yesterday on further security measures taken to protect the presenter.

He was once warned by police to check under his car for bombs every time he went out after a contract was put out on him by an underworld boss.

Features, page 18

Somerset seaside resort mourns favourite daughter

By SIMON DE BRUXELLES

WESTON-SUPER-MARE was last night mourning its favourite daughter.

Although she travelled the world and became a household name Miss Dando never lost touch with the Somerset town where she grew up and later spent four years as a cub reporter.

She started her career on the local weekly newspaper, the *Weston and Somerset Mercury*, where her father Jack, now in his 80s, was chief compositor and her older brother, Nigel, was a reporter.

Mr Dando, 47, first heard of his sister's death in a television newscast. Speaking at his father's bungalow in Weston last night he said: "I was working in the newsroom of the *Bristol Evening Post* when I got a call to say Jill had been involved in an incident. I decided to follow it up myself by making a couple of calls when a newscast came on one of the TV screens in the office to say that Jill had been killed."

"We are devastated by what has happened to Jill. It is simply unimaginable why anyone should want to end her life in this tragic way."

"The open, friendly, approachable personality who appeared on our TV screens was no act. I last saw her on Easter Sunday, when she and

her fiancé, Alan Farthing, came over to my house near Bath and we all had Sunday lunch. She was on good form. She was looking forward to her wedding. We were all looking forward to that so much... now this."

Few places are bleaker than a holiday resort out of season but a particular pall hung over Jill Dando's home town yesterday. The town had been looking forward to emerging from its winter hibernation but in the bus queues and the cafés there was only glum faces and one topic of conversation.

On the windswept seafront where the grey sea merged with the grey sky, a solitary old man hunched against the wind as he read the front-page news in the evening paper.

The current editor of the *Mercury*, where Miss Dando's career began in 1979, Judi Kiesel, said: "Jill was Weston's favourite daughter. The whole town is in shock."

Gordon Wilsner, the paper's chief reporter for 40 years and Miss Dando's mentor, remembers a lively, enthusiastic personality who played a leading role in the Weston Dramatic Society and had unusually good access to local government. "She never hid her ambition to get into broadcasting, but while she was here she always seemed to enjoy the job. She was a great favourite," he said. "One year, I recall, the Mayor of Weston was a bachelor who had his sister as his Lady Mayoress but if there was a function she couldn't attend, he'd ask Jill instead."

Jeremy Williams, the former Editor of the *Mercury* who gave her that first job at the age of 16, said: "It was clear from the start how good she would be. She was very friendly, outgoing and really interested in people. Those qualities stayed with her throughout her career and she never changed, even though she became a star."

"She was always friendly and bubbly and nothing was too much trouble and went to great lengths to put people at ease. If you think of someone you would want around for dinner it would be Jill because you knew you would get a relaxed fun evening."

Miss Dando, whose mother died of cancer aged 52, helped raise over £150,000 for a hospice in Weston and opened the building in 1996.

Jill Dando in 1988, when she worked for regional TV

US when choosing to step outside the security cordon that comes as a price of their celebrity. Since the gruesome killing of Roman Polanski's wife, the actress Sharon Tate, by Charles Manson's followers in 1969, stopping stalkers has been as much of a preoccupation for Hollywood royalty as pleasing fans.

Security guards and cameras are the norm at stars' homes in Los Angeles, as are bodyguards for even the shortest outing. Younger celebrities who underestimate the risk do so at their peril. Brad Pitt was fortunate last year that a young woman who broke into his home only wanted to wear his pyjamas and sleep in his bed.

Others live either invisibly, except for tightly controlled public appearances, or

with hair-trigger anxiety. The Spielbergs, like Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman, live behind anonymous gates and dense woods on streets in Pacific Palisades where patrol cars from private security firms question strangers.

Most, but not all, are spotted. Last year Jonathan Norman, 31, was sentenced to life in prison for climbing into the Spielbergs' grounds with handcuffs, duct tape and, apparently, a morbid sexual obsession for the director. Details of the Spielberg family's daily routines were found in his flat.

The year before Robert Hoskins, an unemployed loner, received a ten-year sentence for lingering in the driveway to a fortress-like mansion Madonna owned atop the Hollywood Hills.

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Tough laws try to curb threat to women

Taken to task? Only if the questioners have asked for it

Prolonged periods spent in the company of military persons takes its toll on plain English. After a weekend in Washington at Nato's 50th birthday party, Tony Blair's command of his own language has been... well, diminished and degraded.

First casualty of Nato's linguistic attrition seems to be the word "ask". As he reported the summit attendance (to a thin Hous) yesterday, it became clear he had forgotten this helpful little expression,

so widely understood by ordinary people. Our PM no longer asks, he tasks.

The Prime Minister seemed to have been tasking a lot. His response to MPs' toughest inquiries was that he had "tasked" somebody else to come up with an answer. When William Hague wanted to know whether oil sanctions against Serbia would be enforced against Russian tankers, and whether Nato intended to board and inspect the vessels, Mr Blair said he had "tasked"

Nato planners to find the solution to this dilemma.

Alice Mahon (Lab, Halifax) was worried about Serbia's neighbour, neutral Montenegro. What if the Russians tried to ship oil to Montenegro? Mr Blair replied that Nato planners had been "tasked" to come up with the answer to that, too.

A vignette of the Blair at breakfast swims into the mind's eye. "Was that the last of the Shredded Wheat, Cherie," asks Dad, shaking an empty carton. "No," says



Mum. "Twice I've tasked Evan to fetch the new box in. But there's just no tasking that boy. Task Kate, dear: she listens to you..." (Cherie starts opening the post) "Ooh look! The Sedgefield Labour Club have tasked you to unveil their new Pool Lounge."

Easy to mock, of course. But the use of specialist lan-

guage to describe commonplace activities serves a purpose, dignifying the obvious and imparting a sense of mysterious expertise to what might otherwise sound a silly answer.

Consider in more detail those two questions, to either or both of which a whole string of backbenchers want-

ed answers. William Hague, Tam Dalyell (Lab, Linlithgow), Donald Anderson (the Labour Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Select Committee), Alice Mahon, Roseanna Cunningham (SNP, Perth) and Dennis Davies (Lab, Llanelli) wanted to know how you could cut off Serbia's oil supplies without strangling Montenegro, and what was the point of apprehending friendly oil tankers unless you apprehend the Russian ones too.

Simple conundrums, these:

rather like asking how you would drive to Cornwall without passing through Devon. Imagine asking the Transport Minister the first, and the Home Secretary the second, and being told: "I've asked a committee of experts to find the answer."

Ladicrous. But the Prime Minister has tasked the experts. So that's all right, then.

Mr Blair did betray frustration at having to give these non-answers. Towards the end of the session he began telling those who questioned

him about apprehending Russian tankers, that he had, of course, tasked Nato to consider this question — but adding (to Tam Dalyell) that in his view Nato would appear to "lack seriousness" if we did not take "measures" against all shipments.

It struck me this was susceptible to the headline "Stop Russian tankers," Blair tells Nato, but, tasked to keep an eye on the Chamber, reporters' attention wanders.

Kosovo, pages 13-15

Forgotten rural poor are losing out, says Prince

BRITAIN's rural poor risk being neglected, as business and ministers pour money into inner-city regeneration, the Prince of Wales will say today.

Business leaders and politicians should do more to help farmers and other country dwellers to diversify economically and develop stronger community ties, the Prince believes.

He is anxious to encourage schemes that would enable people in rural areas to reclaim unused land for projects that would benefit the local area — from playgrounds to co-operatively-run shops.

A source close to the Prince said yesterday: "What companies and the Government should do is look at the experience of regeneration projects that have been successful in the inner cities and see if there are lessons that can be transferred to rural areas."

"Some of the issues that need to be tackled are: how can farming communities diversify? What more can be done to make better use of open spaces?"

The Prince's comments take him into a highly charged political arena. Last year's countryside march, in which some 150,000 people marched on London, betrayed a widespread unease about perceived marginalisation of the countryside. After failing to persuade

Government and business urged to tackle poverty beyond the inner cities, reports Alexandra Frean

the previous Conservative administration of the importance of community enterprise schemes, the Prince is said to be relieved that the Labour Government is embracing his ideas through its own community-based regeneration programmes.

He is pleased at the "green spaces initiative" launched last month by the New Opportunities Fund, which will make £125 million of lottery money available to community projects to develop parks and playing fields in both rural and urban areas.

The Prince's speech will be delivered at the twelfth annual Community Enterprise Awards ceremony, run by his charity, Business in the Community, and sponsored by The Times and NatWest.

He will highlight the achievements of Business in the Community, which used last year's awards ceremony to

launch an ambitious Regeneration Action programme in 40 of the nation's most deprived communities.

Businesses that have taken part in the scheme have contributed more than £5 million in cash and kind to community-led projects in the scheme.

The awards ceremony at St James's Palace in London will be attended by Marmie Jackson, chairman and owner of the Harlem Globetrotters basketball team. Mr Jackson, a former Globetrotter player, is a leading figure in the community enterprise movement in the United States.

□ The Prince yesterday likened inner-city industrial buildings to palaces and cathedrals and spoke of his despair as many were torn down.

"One remarkable industrial building after another has been systematically demolished... mercilessly swept away in a fashionable frenzy," he told the "Making Heritage Industrial Buildings Work" conference.

The Prince was speaking at the former Great Western Railway works in Swindon which is being converted into a heritage centre. He said there were many vacant industrial buildings of comparable merit.

"The challenge is to ensure where appropriate they are conserved and brought back into contemporary use."



The often-reproduced photograph of the D-Day landings. Roy Walker, below, is the soldier in the left foreground

Camera-shy warrior comes clean

THE identity of a British Tommy caught in one of the most famous photographs of the D-Day landings has finally been uncovered (Paul Wilkinson writes).

For almost 45 years Roy Walker kept quiet despite seeing himself in countless newspapers, magazines and textbooks on the invasion on June 6, 1944. He even resisted an Imperial War Museum appeal for soldiers in the shot taken on Sword beach to come forward.

But now Mr Walker has

disclosed that he is the battle-weary young soldier at the water's edge. He was discovered by Barrie Barnes, a teacher from Hull, who is writing a book about his old unit, the 50th Northumbrian Regiment.

Mr Walker, now 79, and living in Scarborough, said: "Barrie is the only one I've told apart from a few close friends. I've seen the picture published all over the place, but I'm not one for getting my name on the front page, so I just kept it to myself." He said he had been taking a wound-

ed comrade in his Bren-gun carrier to a beach first aid post. "I chased along the beach in my carrier and was stopped by the beachmaster, who bawled at me: 'What the bloody hell are you doing? You're attracting enemy fire...' I told him what had happened and had to walk my mate down to the water's edge, where a first aid post was being set up."

"As I was walking back to the gun carrier somebody took my photo, which appeared in all the daily papers later."



Alan Clark condemns 'incompetent' leader

WILLIAM Hague faced the first signs of open revolt at the jettisoning of his party's Thatcherite past yesterday with a direct assault on his leadership.

Alan Clark, former minister and MP for Kensington and Chelsea, said the confusion about the party's direction was "deplorable". He added: "I think the whole row looks bad and just shows how incompetently we are being led."

Although regarded as a maverick, Mr Clark's remarks echo the private misgivings of a number of Tory MPs at the handling and substance of Mr Hague's new approach to public services.

There was also further confusion last night at the latest policy ideas floated by Peter Lilley, the Tory deputy leader. At the weekend he raised the prospect of privatising the Post Office and turning over proceeds from the National Lottery to the National Health Service, a proposal the Tories have vigorously attacked Labour for.

Sources close to John Redwood, the shadow industry

secretary, said yesterday that it was "wrong" to suggest the party might go for a wholesale sell-off of the Post Office.

MPs close to the health team, led by Ann Widdecombe, expressed astonishment that the Tories should adopt an idea they had so roundly criticised.

Tory chiefs stressed that Mr Lilley was only turning over ideas, and that neither had been adopted as party policy.

Mr Hague conceded yesterday that there had been some "lively discussion" in the Shadow Cabinet about switching the emphasis away from private sector solutions for the health and education ser-

vices. He insisted, though, that the party was united and that he would not be deterred from presenting to voters a more consumer-friendly image of the Tories.

The leadership is encouraged that its polls show Labour's lead over health had been cut by nearly a quarter in the past six months, with the Tories also making up ground on education.

Francis Maude, the Shadow Chancellor, kept up the modernising momentum by pledging last night to match the Government's £40 billion extra for health and education over the next three years.

Tory officials insisted that Mr Maude's speech to the Regents Park and Kensington North Conservative Association did not mean the party no longer believed in cutting government spending. They indicated the party's next election manifesto would include a commitment to cutting taxes. The search for large-scale savings to meet the party's traditional commitment to a smaller State will concentrate on the £100 billion social security budget.

Millennial jeers for Dobson

By IAN MURRAY, MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT

NHS workers boomed and cheered Frank Dobson yesterday when he refused to consider allowing them a £500 bonus for working over the millennium holiday period.

The Health Secretary was supposed to be guest of honour at the annual conference in Brighton of Unison, the public service union. Instead the 800 delegates, who represent ancillary workers given a 2.8 per cent pay rise this year, heard his 40-minute speech in silence. After perfunctory applause they then launched into a series of attacking questions on pay, NHS reforms and millennium working arrangements.

"Will you be working over

the millennium and how much will you be getting paid?" Yunis Bakhus, a nurse from Newcastle, asked to cheers and applause.

To a rising chorus of jeers the Health Secretary began a long, rambling answer about how the NHS needed to be able to deliver a full service over the holiday period.

"I think I have got an official invitation to go to the Dome," he said eventually. "Whether that is work or pleasure I don't really know."

The Health Department has told health authorities to ensure that they provide proper transport and catering over the holiday, but to make no special payments.

NEWS IN BRIEF

New effort to cut red tape

The Prime Minister has ordered a war on red tape after complaints that industry is struggling to cope with new regulations and laws. Government departments are to face checks to ensure that new laws do not stifle or overburden business or the professions with bureaucratic demands.

Dr Jack Cunningham, Minister for the Cabinet Office, has been given the new enforcement role inside Whitehall to tackle ministries with unnecessary regulations and paperwork. He is to outline his approach tonight in a speech to the Social Market Foundation.

Dyslexic pupils rap Blunkett

David Blunkett, the Education Secretary, who has said he is concerned about the plight of dyslexic children, has apologised to 11 Nuny Kirk Hall special school pupils in Netherthorpe, Northumberland, after sending them a 51-page policy report in response to a simple question. His department's two-page, closely typed "sorry" note also upset the teenagers and their teacher. It was too difficult to read.

Court criticises TV film-maker

A documentary maker filming the "seriously delinquent" lifestyles of five young people in Nottingham went far beyond merely observing them, the High Court ruled. Sir Stephen Brown asked for undertakings from October Films and Channel 4 not to use the footage in four of the cases and not to identify the fifth youth. Nottingham City Council brought the action to protect the children, who were in its care.

Bicycle thief was caught on the run

A marathon runner was arrested as he crossed the finishing line of a race after a fellow athlete recognised him as a bicycle thief. The man was led away for questioning in his running shorts and vest just minutes after he completed the 26-mile South Coast Marathon in Gosport, Hampshire, and later admitted theft. After being taken to the police station the runner asked to go to the exercise yard.

Cancer helpline is launched

A helpline was launched yesterday at the start of a new campaign against Britain's second biggest cancer killer. The 24-hour Symptoms Hotline will alert people to the signs of bowel cancer, which claims nearly 20,000 lives each year. Set up by the Crocus Trust charity, the line was developed by former BBC Watchdog presenter and cancer sufferer Lynn Faulds Wood. The Hotline is on 0870 2424870.

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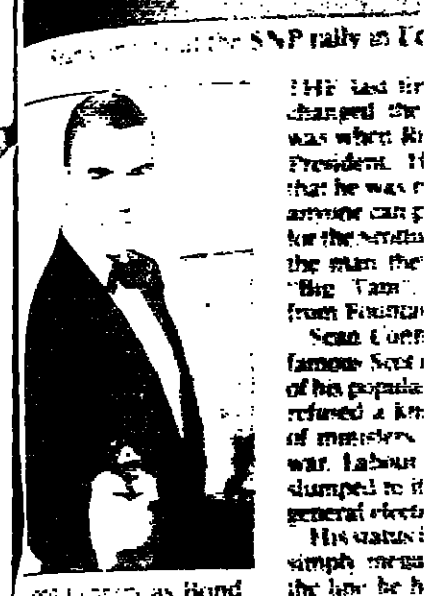
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He may be the world's most famous Scotsman, but can Big Tam sway his country's voters?



Sean Connery at the SNP rally in Edinburgh yesterday. An archetypal Scot, he is adored all the more by his fans for being grumpy, litigious, tight-fisted and having a strong streak of male chauvinism



Legend: Connery as Bond

THE last time an ageing film star changed the course of an election was when Ronald Reagan stood for President. He had the advantage that he was running for office. But if anyone can pull off the same trick — for the Scottish National Party — it is the man they know in Scotland as "Big Tam", the former milkman from Fountainbridge in Edinburgh.

Sean Connery is simply the most famous Scot in the world. A measure of his popularity is that, when he was refused a knighthood on the advice of ministers, including Donald Dewar, Labour's standing in the polls slumped to its lowest point since the general election.

His status is now more than that of simply megastar. Somewhere along the line he has become an icon. No

Magnus Linklater says if anyone can help the SNP it's Connery

matter that he has lived abroad, in Marbella or Monte Carlo, for more than 20 years; he is still regarded as Scotland's favourite son. The fact that he is frequently grumpy, taciturn, legendarily tight with his money, litigious and, at best, cavalier in his attitude to women, seems only to have enhanced his standing.

When, in 1993, he was granted the freedom of the City of Edinburgh, the Usher Hall was packed to the rafters with ordinary folk who had come to welcome him back. He said a few gruff words, did a soft-shoe shuffle on the stage — and brought the house down. "Good on you, Tam!" shouted a cracked Edinburgh

voice from the crowd, and the place erupted. How he has achieved all this is something of a mystery. Being a Hollywood megastar is not an automatic passport to affection. Other Scots who have achieved fame and fortune abroad have fallen out badly with their fellow countrymen for getting too big for their boots. There is a famous Scots expression, "I kent yer faither", which carries the implicit warning: however grand you become, I know who you are and where you came from.

Billy Connolly broke the rules by poking fun at his native Glasgow. The pop singer Sheena Easton is unlikely to be welcomed back after say-

ing her Scottish background meant nothing to her. The jury is even out on the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, who is judged to be rather more fond of Downing Street than Dunfermline.

Despite Connery's long exile, his enormous wealth, and the fact that he sometimes seems to treat Scotland as an extended golf course, he has avoided all such criticism. He is seen to be genuinely attached to his roots, he clearly enjoys coming back, and he is still recognisable as an archetypal Scot. A streak of male chauvinism, a laconic style, a tendency to hang on to his money, and a readiness to use his fists to settle a dispute if necessary, have all added to, rather

than diminished, his appeal. Those, for better or for worse, are red-blooded Scottish characteristics.

Whether all that is enough to persuade voters back to the SNP is another thing. They may well warm to Connery, but they are still more likely to decide the election on prosaic matters such as tax and the economy rather than the terse admonitions of their hero. His entry on to the campaign scene has come a little late, his words yesterday too clipped to tip the balance. And though the crowd, as ever, enjoyed the sight of Big Tam back on native soil, it is likely to vote with its head rather than its heart.

As one of those interviewed yesterday put it: "I'll definitely be going to his next movie. But I think I'll make up my own mind how I vote."

Connery heads SNP rescue mission

Continued from page 1
endum campaign, when he stood alongside Donald Dewar, the Scottish Secretary, and Mr Salmond urging Scots to embrace devolution. "There was a spirit of positive enthusiasm," he said.

But, taking a swipe at the stage-managed style of new Labour, he added: "The control

freaks have blown that away and replaced it with fear and intimidation."

He also attacked the media, which the SNP blames for the party's poor showing in the opinion polls. "I have never in my life seen such shameful abuse by the Scottish media," he said. "I am ashamed of it and I am angry. I know the

game was to provoke me. Well, it has succeeded."

Connery reminded Scots that they have waited almost 300 years for their parliament. "It is my hope that it will evolve with dignity and integrity and it will reflect the new voice of Scotland. If I was asked, who will win this election, I would answer, hope-

ly Scotland. The only thing to do is vote and vote again and I will be right with you."

Afterwards, as Connery stood with Mr Salmond on the conference centre steps, waving to passers-by, one audience member mused over his final words. "How can he be right here with us?" she asked. "He lives in the Bahamas."

SNP activists spoke warmly of the performance. "He said what needed to be said. It's too early to write off the SNP," said one. "We're lucky to have someone like Sean to remind people of that."

But the speech did not impress political opponents. A Labour insider was dismissive. "He had nothing new to add to the political debate. The SNP is in trouble, with or without Sean Connery."

Braveheart sets out to capture the nerd vote

BAGPIPE playing will be compulsory, computer nerds will have a public holiday and the New Deal will be replaced by Ye Olde Deal in which jobless youngsters renovate castles.

This is Scotland post-devolution as envisaged by William Wallace (his real name) who is standing as an independent "Braveheart" candidate in Edinburgh Central and Lothians.

Mr Wallace, 37, a telephone engineer, is backed by Eldos Interactive, a computer games publisher, which will be launching a new game called *Braveheart* in June.

Incorporating imagery and dialogue from the film starring Mel Gibson, players take on the role of a famous Scot or clan chieftain and attempt to invade and conquer England. But players may cross the border only after they have defeated Scottish rivals and been crowned King of Scotland.

Mr Wallace's manifesto pledges also include abolishing taxes on computer games and appointing a minister for computer games.

Photograph, page 26

CAMPAIGN FOR SCOTLAND

Labour pledges better childcare

Labour outlined measures to boost Scottish nursery and childcare services yesterday. The initiative includes a "first steps" programme to provide education and health services for under-threes under one roof. It also guarantees nursery places for all three-year-olds by the end of the first parliament, and an expansion of after-school and homework clubs.

Blair 'lied over tuition fees'

Tony Blair was accused of lying over tuition fees by the Scottish Tories as the party unveiled a new campaign poster in Edinburgh. The Prime Minister appeared next to the word "Blair" with a quotation from 1997 in which he stated he had no plans to introduce tuition fees. David McLetchie, Scottish Tory leader, said the Tories would abolish them.

Pointers to a proud past

The Scottish parliament should promote Scots words, says Sir Iain Noble, an independent candidate standing for the Highlands and Islands regional list. He suggests road signs as one opportunity, with the Forth Bridge becoming the Forth Brig ("heavier and shorter"), roundabouts "roundels" and birchwoods "birks".

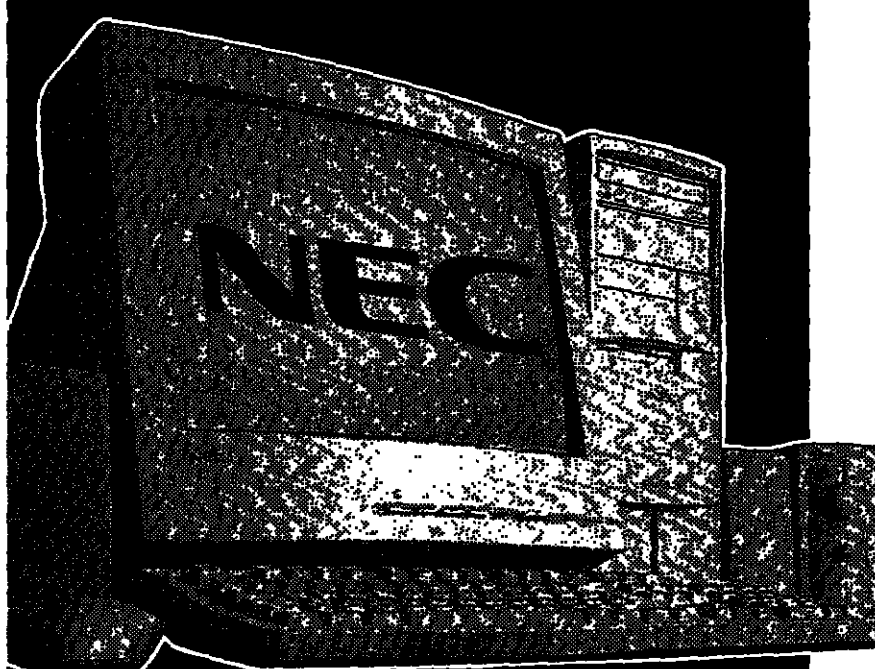
QUOTE of the day

6 Alex Salmond is looking increasingly like a maiden in distress waiting to be rescued by James Bond. I don't think it's going to happen?

Lord Steel of Aikwood on the SNP and Sean Connery

today's AGENDA
David McLetchie, Scottish Tory leader, has campaign trail early as Peterhead ferryway. Alex Salmond, SNP leader, in Dunfermline. Jim Wallace, Liberal Democrat leader, launches Highlands and Islands charter in Inverness. Donald Dewar, Scottish Secretary, in at Westminster for Scottish Questions.

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Be calm but vigilant, Straw tells minorities

By STEWART TENDLER AND MICHAEL EVANS

JACK STRAW, the Home Secretary, urged ethnic communities yesterday not to panic after the nail bomb attacks in Brixton and Brick Lane but told them to remain vigilant.

As Mr Straw described to the Commons the police efforts being made to catch the bomber, Scotland Yard detectives sent two emergency messages to every force in the country. They gave details of the attacks and warned any force with an ethnic community to consider ways of increasing their protection.

Mr Straw told MPs: "Any attacks on these communities is an attack on British people and the whole of British society. We will not tolerate racism of any kind, still less this abhorrent crime."

M15 officers who have joined the hunt for the bomber were working on theories that the attacker or attackers could be breakaway members of the neo-Nazi group Combat 18.

Telephone calls claiming responsibility on behalf of the



London's Asian communities remain on their guard

group had been made after both bombings. However, security service officers believe the bombers might be using the name of the group although they are not striking on its behalf. They do not think the attacks are part of a national conspiracy.

M15 and police believe there are probably no more than 30 active hard-core members of Combat 18 but not all their identities are known. There are other supporters linked to the group and a fringe of people who claim to be members of the organisation.

Yesterday, a number of Asian peers confirmed they had received threatening letters from another group called White Wolves, which also

claimed responsibility for the Brixton bombing.

Several peers complained that they had reported the letters but they were not taken seriously. When Mr Straw was questioned about the letters in the Commons he said he was not aware of them.

Detectives from the Yard's anti-terrorist branch are also studying closed circuit television footage from sites around Brick Lane to try and identify the bomber arriving and leaving the area.

The bomb was in a black Reebok bag left in the roadway in Hanbury Street, off Brick Lane. The bag was placed by a parked camper van outside a restaurant that was closed. Hanbury Street is

not covered by cameras and police are looking at film from Brick Lane and a number of other main roads.

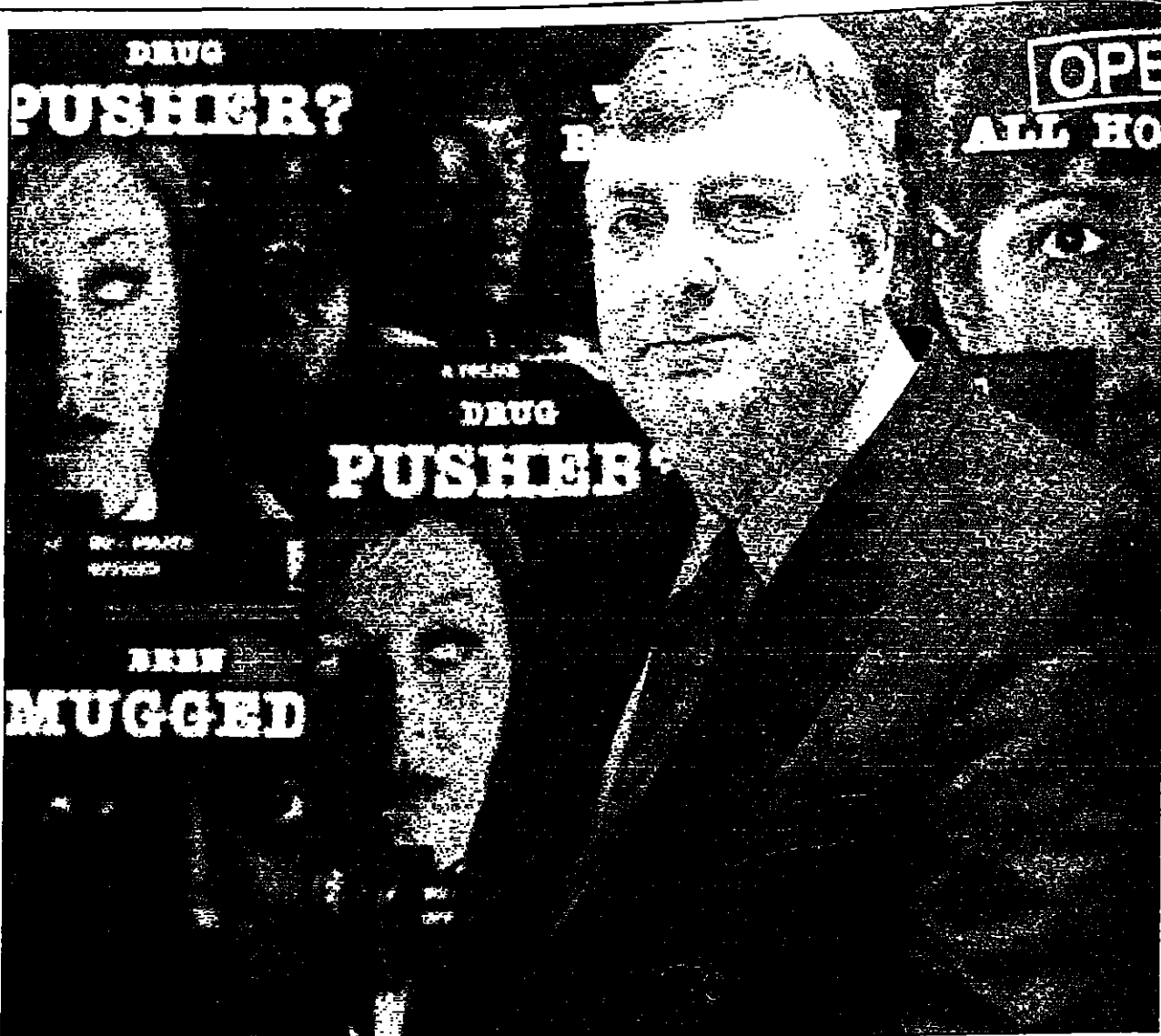
Deputy Assistant Commissioner Alan Fry, head of the anti-terrorist branch, said there were hours of film to check and the task was painstaking and slow.

During the day, rewards for catching and convicting the bomber rose to a total of £60,000.

Bangladeshi community leaders in the area yesterday accused police of failing to protect them on Saturday before the bomb exploded.

Shofique Chowdhury, general secretary of the Bangladesh Welfare Association, said that police were "negligent" because a police station in Brick Lane was closed, resulting in a slower response to the bombing.

But Superintendent Rose Fitzpatrick said that there had been patrols on the streets and that another, larger station provided cover. She said there had been extra officers in the area and police arrived within minutes of the blast.



Challenging stereotypes: Fred Broughton of the Police Federation. Some black officers are unhappy with his posters

Black police upset by 'race bias' posters

By STEWART TENDLER, CRIME CORRESPONDENT

A POSTER campaign using shock tactics to tackle racism in the police service began yesterday in spite of objections from black officers.

Produced for the Police Federation, which represents junior officers in England and Wales, the posters are similar to some used in a campaign last year by the Commission for Racial Equality. They were drawn up as part of the response to the Macpherson report on the police investigation into Stephen Lawrence's murder and are meant to challenge preconceptions. Some

black officers recommended that the federation should abandon the campaign, but the commission backed the theme.

Designs drawn up by the federation include one poster showing a black man and a car and asking: "What do you call a black man in a BMW?" The poster explains he is a traffic squad sergeant on patrol. Another shows a black man and the slogan "Been mugged?" Underneath, it says: "Tell him, he's a police officer."

The federation has spent £30,000 on the posters and 25,000 posters were sent out yesterday. Chief constables have already indicated their support for the campaign and the federation hopes the posters may also be put up in career offices and colleges.

Yesterday Fred Broughton, chairman of the federation, said the posters were designed to undermine stereotypes. He said: "We knew it would be controversial."

But Inspector Paul Wilson, head of the Black Police Association in the Metropolitan Police section, said the association had been consulted and he was surprised the federation had gone ahead.

"We feel uncomfortable about this campaign," he thought the federation's efforts might be seen as a cheap gimmick. The federation in the past had never seen racism as an issue to address, he said.

FORCE RACIST, CHIEF ADMITS

The Chief Constable of Merseyside admitted yesterday that his force was institutionally racist and promised to root out racist members (Russell Jenkins writes). Norman Bettison, 42, also announced the setting up of a task force with 15 officers to re-examine 300 cases from the past year to see if any was tainted by discrimination. It is investigating racism, the community and race relations task force will listen to "whistle-blowers" willing to inform on colleagues.

Family praise PC killed by van

By HELEN JOHNSTONE

THE family of a police officer who died when a van sped through a speed check, dragging him for a hundred yards, spoke yesterday of his devotion to duty.

PC Jeffrey Tooley, 26, was struck by the van, being driven at more than 50mph, before being dragged to his death at Shoreham, West Sussex, at the weekend. The officer, from Emsworth, near Havant, Hampshire, was carrying out a laser-gun speed check. He was wearing fluorescent clothing and carrying a torch.

His brother Russ, 23, a leisure centre manager, broke down in tears and had to leave a press conference after saying: "His happiest days were with the police fighting for justice, so give him some justice now and find them please."

PC Tooley's family had attended the press conference at police headquarters in Lewes



PC Tooley was dragged to his death by the van

to speak of his love for the job and to appeal for the driver to come forward. Police have begun a murder hunt for the driver, who is believed to have set fire to the van soon after the incident. Detective Superintendent Alan Ladley said tests were being done on a van found north of Brighton.

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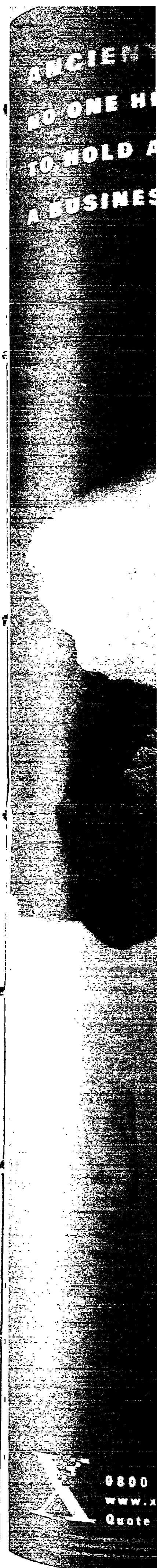
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Labour anticipates defeat in local polls

BY ALEXANDRA FREAN
LOCAL GOVERNMENT
CORRESPONDENT

THE Labour Party is preparing for a record low turnout and the loss of up to 1,500 seats in next month's local elections because of public dissatisfaction with corruption in town halls and indifference towards council politics.

Hilary Armstrong, the Local Government Minister, admitted yesterday that Labour would suffer more than any other party because it is defending its best local election results. It won 47 per cent of the vote in 1995, the last time the same 13,000 seats in England, Scotland and Wales were contested; that represented a 3 per cent increase over the 1997 general election.

Ms Armstrong said she did not expect the turnout to improve on last year's local polls, when only 26 per cent of the electorate bothered to vote. In some wards the turnout was as low as 10 per cent.

"Low turnout is my main anxiety. Very few people are aware that there are local elections in England. There is far more interest in the elections

VOTES WILL DECIDE 13,000 SEATS

More than 13,000 seats in 362 councils in England, Scotland and Wales are being contested in the local elections on May 6. The elections cover 35 English unitary authorities, 36 English metropolitan authorities, 257 English non-metropolitan districts, 32 Scottish councils and 22 Welsh councils. No London councils have elections on May 6. The last time the same seats were contested was in 1995.

for the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Assembly," she said.

In anticipation of a poor turnout, Labour is already planning to bolster its campaign for wide-ranging reform of local government. Proposals on the table include a new code of ethics and management structures for councils. The party also wants to introduce personalities by creating directly-elected city mayors.

She also suggested that electoral losses for Labour would enable new candidates to enter town-hall politics. "One of the problems is that we now have councillors who tend to be much older, often retired and not working, and mainly men. That is not good democracy."

Tony Travers, local government expert at the London School of Economics, shares that view. "The Blair Government believes in local government, but they want a different kind of local government from the one we have now. They would prefer one with lots of different people in it. As far as they are concerned, a low turnout would justify all their proposed changes."

The Conservatives, who will benefit to a limited extent from a low turnout, are trying to play the sleaze card in their campaign. Richard Ottaway, the party's town-hall spokesman, listed more than 50 instances of "sleaze, incompetence, financial irresponsibility" and "downright criminal activity". But some of his examples illustrate the difficulties of

trying to tarnish all Labour councils with the misdemeanours of the few. His sleaze dossier includes Thurrock, where the Labour council had "unfairly targeted smokers" by requiring them to work an extra 2½ hours a week to make up for their cigarette breaks, and Wycombe, where the joint Liberal-Labour administration had located two park and ride sites close to residential areas.

The sleaze factor notwithstanding, the Tories are set to win 1,100 to 1,400 seats on May 6. In 1995, the Tories attained just 25 per cent of the vote, losing 2,000 seats and 61 councils.

Most experts agree that it is inconceivable that they will not at least benefit from "a dead cat bounce" upwards. The Tories' best chances for victory are not, however, in Labour boroughs but in places such as Bromsgrove and Ashford, which the party lost in 1995, but where a Tory MP was elected in 1997.

The Liberal Democrats stand to benefit most from sleaze in Labour town halls. In Doncaster, they are regarded by many as the only credible alternative to Labour.



Martin Winter on the stump: as a new candidate he has nothing to do with the "Donnygate" scandal, he tells voters

Doncaster's new breed disowns past

BY JAMES LANDALE, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

WHEN Martin Winter, a Labour candidate for next month's local elections, goes doorstepping in Doncaster, he gives voters a new familiar mantra.

"You don't know me from Adam," he says. "But I am as honest as the day is long. I am a new candidate. I am nothing to do with 'Donnygate'. And I think it is time this council had a clean sweep."

For Mr Winter, a 37-year-old former Rugby League professional and father of three, knows there is only one real issue for voters in this South Yorkshire town — trust.

How can anyone trust a town hall which has been so riven with corruption — and how can anyone trust a local Labour Party that has always controlled it?

"Donnygate" is already two years old but the end is not in sight. Some 31 people have been arrested. Councillors, former councillors, and even some council officers have faced allegations concerning expenses fraud, planning irregularities and overseas junkets.

Four people have been jailed and one fined. Two more are due in court shortly. These cases relate only to false accounting charges. What South Yorkshire Police call the "more serious allegations" relating to planning issues are yet to come. The police inquiry has already cost well over £200,000.

The local Labour Party is in turmoil: the council is on its third leader in as many years and the district party is still suspended. Two years ago Labour had 57 of the 63 council seats. Now it has just 43, losses caused as much by party suspensions as by electoral defeats.

The Liberal Democrats sniff blood and hope to double their six seats in May. The Tories hope to add to their three

seats. Close observers predict that Labour will lose half a dozen seats but retain control — for now.

For Labour candidates like Martin Winter, there is no choice but to face the mess head on. So he distributes disarmingly frank election literature: "As a newly selected candidate, Martin Winter has no connection with any of the past events concerning Doncaster council." Other new candidates insist that new Labour will provide a "new council, a better council".

The approach is being encouraged by Caroline Flint and Rosie Winterton, two new-



Doncaster town hall: a Labour stronghold

ly-elected local Labour MPs, who are desperately trying to move the local party on. But with more trials and court appearances in the offing, activists are becoming frustrated at their inability to put "Donnygate" behind them. To the good, they say the scandals have made them work harder.

Some 21 seats are up for grabs on May 6 and all but one are held by Labour. But about half Labour's incumbents are standing down to be replaced by first-timers. Local party chiefs insist the retirements are caused by age and ill-health. Party members suspect a precautionary clear-out.

OTHER COUNCILS HIT BY SLEAZE CLAIMS

DONCASTER is the biggest but not the only Labour town hall that has been dogged by allegations of wrongdoing and bitter party infighting (Alexandra Frean writes).

While some allegations of corruption or impropriety have resulted in police investigations, in others the Labour Party has conducted its own inquiries and has suspended a number of councillors or, in some cases, the entire local party.

Labour's readiness to tackle these allegations head on is a mark of Tony Blair's determination not to let town halls become the weak point of his administration.

In 1995, the local Labour party in Walsall was suspended over allegations that some councillors took a free holiday at local taxpayers' expense. No criminal charges were ever instituted.

In Barnsley, two local Labour branches were suspended after allegations of nepotism in the selection of candidates for council seats.

In John Prescott's home territory of Hull, Labour's National Executive was brought in to monitor the selection of candidates for this year's local

elections after a bout of ward in-fighting and allegations, which were not proved, of misuse of power.

Other Labour councils that have become mired in allegations of sleaze or party in-fighting include Blaenau Gwent, North Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire and Glasgow, Wakefield, Slough, Hackney, Rotherham, Barnsley and Shropshire.

Some Tory councillors have also faced allegations, particularly in Hackney.

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Party politics force pair out of union posts

TWO students have been disqualified from senior positions in the Oxford Union after being found guilty of electoral malpractice for holding a birthday party two days before polling.

A tribunal ruled that Jeff Bell and Lucy Aitkens had staged the party to solicit votes. They were asked to stand down as treasurer and librarian respectively only days after being elected on March 5.

Mr Bell, who had been unopposed, said yesterday that the ruling followed a complaint to the union by Miss Aitkens's defeated opponent, Hatty Cadman, who has since been elected in her place as librarian.

The tribunal was told that 400 invitations were sent out for the party, with almost half not addressed to an individual but simply posted in students' pigeon-holes.

After a hearing lasting several hours, the union ruled that not all the guests could have been personal friends and disqualified the pair for "organised treating which was likely to affect the result".

The tribunal, on March 10, found that the party was intended primarily to increase the exposure of both candidates and to influence voting.

The students had also paid £50 for a disc jockey, breaking rules prohibiting money being spent to win support.

Mr Bell, a law student at Lady Margaret Hall, said that

Students broke electoral rules by holding a birthday disco, writes Helen Johnstone

he and Miss Aitkens, studying human sciences at St Hilda's College, were close friends and decided to organise a private party to celebrate their twentieth birthdays on the same day, February 28.

He said that the first available date for a party at a suitable venue in Oxford was three days later, on March 3. "We provided documentation to the tribunal to confirm that."

Mr Bell now believed they were the victims of an old school tie system. "I love the university and the Oxford Union is a great institution, but as I'm from the North East and Lucy is from Australia, maybe we did not fit in."

"I think it is a travesty. If the date of our birthday party had been two weeks later, we would have held the party for the same reasons and there would have been no problem. It is a technicality which has brought us down."

He said that more than 100 people were at the event partly because he and Miss Aitkens

knew a lot of people and partly to ensure that they were not left out of pocket.

Miss Aitkens had also been before the tribunal accused of organised treating on March 2, when the American talk show host Jerry Springer was a guest at the union. She was alleged to have "handed out sweets to members of the audience in a random fashion and in a manner which drew attention to herself".

However, the tribunal found that, although her behaviour was flamboyant and possibly attention-seeking, it was not in breach of the rules.

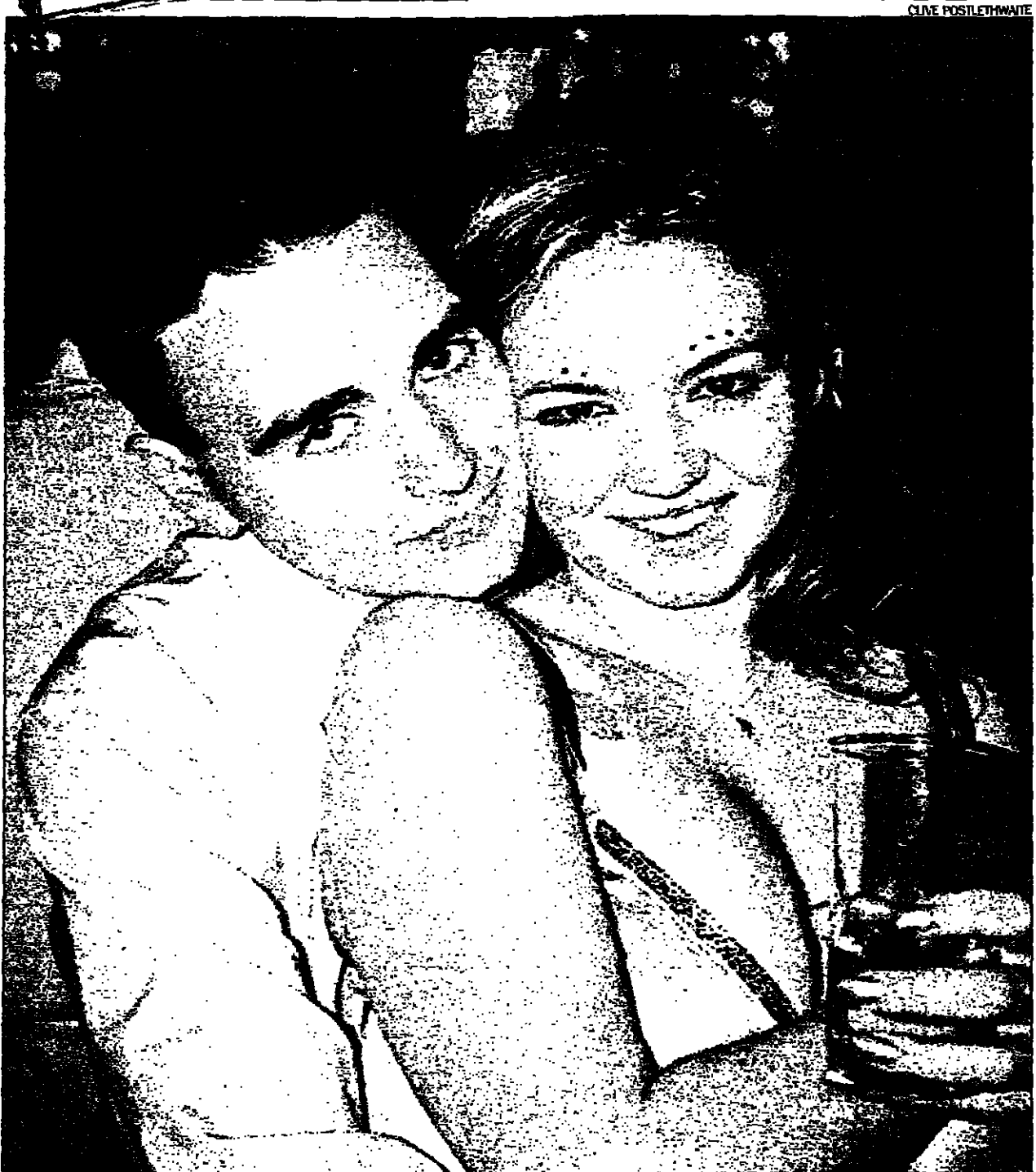
Nicky Black, President of the Oxford Union, said yesterday that the two had been disqualified because it was found that they had held the birthday party with the intention of soliciting votes.

"They can stand again for other positions, but they will not be able to stand again for these particular posts," she said.

Miss Cadman, who also assumes the title of vice-president, said: "I felt I had lost unfairly and now the tribunal has ruled I lost unfairly."

"Several people have since accused us of doing something below the belt and there is a bit of bad feeling and I feel a bit uncomfortable at times. Obviously this isn't the way that I would have liked to become librarian, but I think it is perfectly acceptable for me to assume the position."

هكذا من الاجل



Jeff Bell and Lucy Aitkens at the joint 20th birthday party that cost them their Oxford Union positions

NEWS IN BRIEF

Three in court over shootings

Three men were remanded in custody by Rochdale magistrates after shooting incidents last Friday. Tunde Yakub Adetoro and Andrew Dennis are charged with attempting to murder four policemen, conspiracy to commit armed robbery, possessing an AK47 rifle, taking two cars and driving them dangerously. Mr Adetoro is charged with one further attempted murder. Francis Dixon is charged with conspiracy to commit armed robbery, assaulting a police officer and possessing firearms.

Driver jailed

A driver was jailed for four years by the Old Bailey for attacking another motorist with a baseball bat. Michael Bons, 36, of Middlesbrough, chased a family for five miles after an incident in the Blackwall Tunnel, East London.

Player charged

The Everton striker Michael Branch, 20, has been charged with being drunk and disorderly. He was arrested in Liverpool early on Sunday and has been bailed to appear before city magistrates on June 1.

Pets left to die

More than 140 animals died of hunger and thirst at Crewe Animal Rescue centre. Ann Skott, owner of the Cheshire sanctuary, admitted 24 charges of causing unnecessary suffering. Sentencing will be after reports.

£450,000 Chips

A record for a watercolour by Sir Alfred Munnings was set at Sotheby's in New York. Violet Munnings's *Horse Chips at Chantilly* was sold for £459,160. The previous Munnings watercolour record was £65,000.

Ostrich flap

An escaped ostrich was trapped when police in Hampshire deployed a spotter plane and used a net fired from a gun by a specialist officer. They were concerned that its antics could have caused a road accident.

Stars unite to fight world debt

By Adam Sherwin

FOURTEEN years after Live Aid, the world's leading musicians are uniting once more for a global concert to help the Third World.

Harvey Goldsmith, the Live Aid promoter, is gathering the cream of the entertainment world for simultaneous concerts in London, New York and Geneva on October 9. The event will be called Net Aid and the organisers hope that one billion people will send a message to politicians through the Internet, urging them to remove the debt hanging over the poorest countries. Michael Jackson,

Sir Paul McCartney and U2 are expected to participate in the concerts, to be held at Wembley Stadium, Giants Stadium in New York and a venue in Geneva.

The concerts will be the last big gathering of music stars this century. It is hoped that they will include Bob Dylan, REM and Luciano Pavarotti, as well as celebrities from film and sport. They will be broadcast live around the world to what is intended to be the largest global television audience for a single event.

Bob Geldof, who put together Live Aid, which raised £123 million in 1985, is understood to be helping the project, but does not wish to take a frontline role.

Geri Halliwell, former Spice Girl and a UN goodwill ambassador, may become a spokeswoman for the campaign.

Mr Goldsmith, who will announce the project at the United Nations in New York today, said: "The end of the millennium is the right time for a huge event to highlight the question of how extreme poverty can be eradicated."

Net Aid is being run in conjunction with the UN Development Programme, which provides funds to help countries combat hunger and environmental damage and foster job creation.

Leading article, page 21

Claret route to health

RED wine helps to prevent heart disease and Cabernet Sauvignon does it best of all, says a French doctor. Jean-Paul Broustet suggests half a bottle a day also wards off dementia such as Alzheimer's disease (Ian Murray writes).

M Broustet, of the Hôpital Cardiologique near Pessac, in the Bordeaux vineyards, writes in the journal *Heart* that cabernet sauvignon, the main claret grape, contains the best antidote to cholesterol. This is because the vines protect

themselves against an autumn fungus by producing large quantities of an anti-oxidant called resveratrol.

Resveratrol produces a high-density cholesterol which prevents the body producing dangerous low-density cholesterol. This probably explains why the French, with a high intake of fats and cholesterol, have the lowest rate of chronic heart disease in Europe.

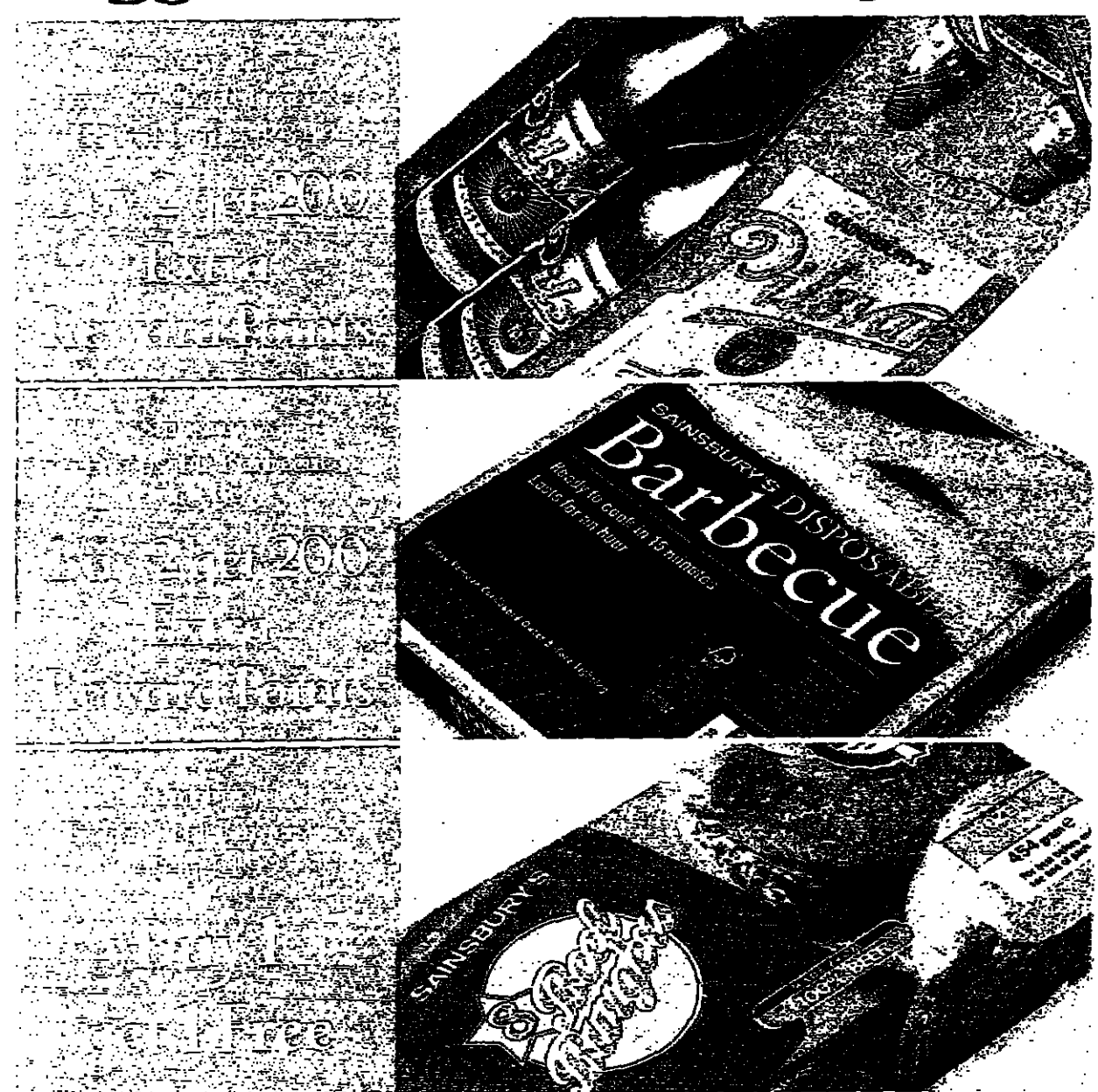
Dr Broustet points out that the death rate from coronaries in Toulouse among men aged

35 to 64 is only 78 per 100,000. This compares with 348 per 100,000 in Belfast and 380 in Glasgow. The average drinker in each city consumes about the same amount of alcohol but in Toulouse it is almost exclusively red wine.

Residents at old people's homes in the Gironde and Dordogne who drank two or three glasses of red wine a day were a fifth as likely to develop Alzheimer's as non-drinkers.

Leading article, page 21

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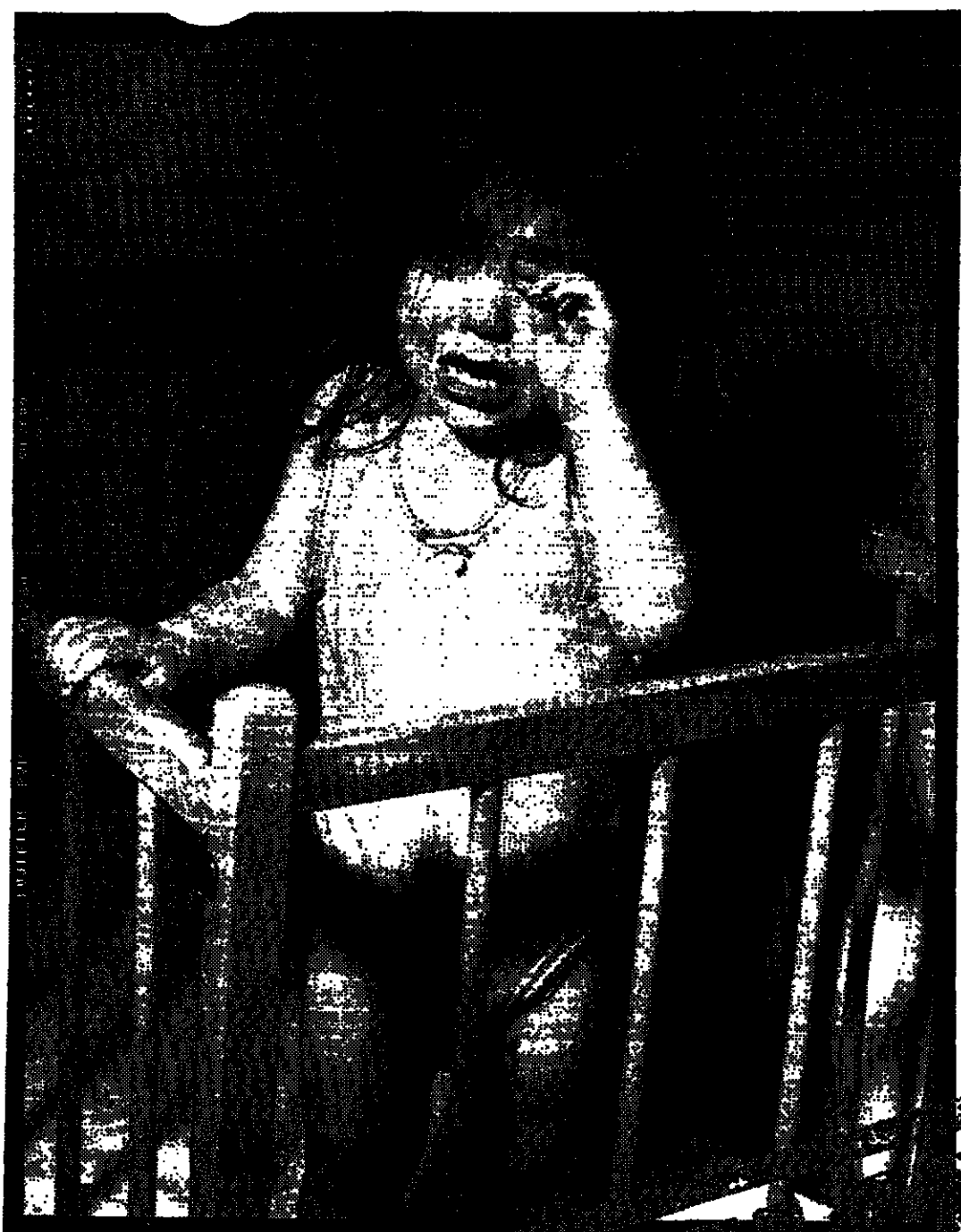
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A Kosovan boy in Albania enjoys the American trappings of Nato's Operation Shining Hope. Foreign aid means wealth for the destitute country

Albania reaps benefit of the war next door

The conflict is bringing boom times to Europe's most primitive country, writes Richard Owen in Tirana

UNDER the impact of the war, Albania — once the most isolated country in Europe and still the most primitive — is being catapulted into the modern world at a speed that nearly a decade of post-communist reforms have failed to match.

Albanian leaders will meet European Union foreign ministers in Luxembourg today not only to ask for more aid to cope with hundreds of thousands of refugees, but also to press for an association agreement with the EU, with the eventual aim of membership.

A massive influx of Western money and manpower over the past month to meet the humanitarian emergency and prepare for a possible offensive against Yugoslavia is already transforming Tirana.

Over the wall of Balkan music and calls from the mosques, the sound of English, French and Italian echoes along the Boulevard of the Martyrs, where for half a century the paranoid dictator Enver Hoxha held his military parades.

The legacy of his rule is still evident: Albania has the lowest per-capita income in Europe, with barely usable roads, barefoot children and subsistence farming.

In Tirana horses and carts vie with battered cars and vans on muddy and potholed

streets strewn with rubbish. "Ten years after Hoxha we are not much better off than Somalia," said Sheriff, a driver sitting in one of the cafes near Skanderbeg Square — named after Albania's national hero. "But the Americans will save us."

Hopes of democracy and prosperity after the fall of communism were dashed three years ago when protests over a fraudulent savings scheme turned into an uprising against Albania's post-communist leader, Sali Berisha.

Bitter divisions between Mr Berisha's right-wing Democratic Party and the Socialists — the reformed communists — descended into civil war and anarchy, frightening off Western investors and putting privatisation schemes on hold.

There were more riots last year against Mr Berisha's Socialist successor, Fatos Nano, who, under Western pressure, was replaced as Prime Minister last September by a fellow



Aid flight: another Nato aircraft arrives

Socialist, Pandeli Majko, who was only 32.

For a correspondent who covered Albania during the riots — when the most common sounds at night were gunfire and breaking glass — the change in atmosphere is striking. All signs of internal strife have been replaced by anti-Serb patriotism and pro-Western euphoria. The fact that

many Albanians only recently blamed the West for backing Mr Berisha, despite economic mismanagement and human rights abuses, has been forgotten. "With Nato and the EU, we might finally connect with history," said *Koha Jone*, the main independent paper.

Tirana's ramshackle airport has become a huge Nato encampment. Hundreds of Albanians queue every day to work as labourers as the airport is upgraded with bulldozers and earth-moving equipment.

"We'll have to do something about these terrible roads," said Major Dan Baggio, the US Army spokesman. "They have more holes than a Swiss cheese."

Cafes and hotels, from the Las Vegas Hamburger Hotel to the Hotel California, have sprung up in Tirana to feed and house the thousands of troops and aid workers.

Paskal Milo, the Foreign Minister, believes Albania's future lies firmly in the West and

points out that the country has reacted in a European way to the crisis rather than with a Balkan mentality. Albania has even handed over its airspace and territorial waters to Nato.

There is, however, a long way to go. Fred Abrahams, the Kosovo specialist for Human Rights Watch, who has been following Albanian affairs closely for six years, said that attitudes to the West had changed from paranoia and disillusionment to unrealistic expectations.

The Majko Government hopes to reduce inflation this year from 40 to 10 per cent. The country's trade deficit has risen to \$700 million (£437.5 million), while GDP, at \$3 billion, is only now beginning to climb back to its level before the collapse of the Berisha Government.

There are also complaints that the Albanians are demanding extortionate sums for inadequate accommodation, and that large amounts of Western aid are being stolen.

Prec Zogaj, an adviser to Rexhep Meidani, Albania's President, said there were bound to be difficulties as the country — with a population of three million — struggled to cope with the refugees.

But he added: "The paradox is that it has taken a war to stabilise Albania."

Editor flees to reopen paper in exile

FROM ANTHONY LOYD IN TETOVO, MACEDONIA

LUCK shows no logic in abetting escape from Kosovo. Some refugees leave in fear, and lose little. Others wish to stay but are expelled, and their loss may know no boundaries.

Fortune was generous to Baton Haxhiu. The editor-in-chief of Kosovo's leading independent Albanian newspaper, *Koha Ditore*, was wanted by Serb state police. So sure was Nato of his fate that it declared him killed a month ago. Hidden in a cellar, with no means of contacting his family, Baton, 33, heard of his death on the BBC World Service four days after airstrikes began.

In an effort to close *Koha Ditore*, the Serb Ministry of Information had fined the paper £133,000 the week before Nato entered the Kosovo conflict, and ordered Baton to pay £41,700. *Koha* was accused of inciting national and ethnic hatred over a headline, "Nato: Now Just Do It", after failed peace negotiations.

On March 25 he arrived for work to find his office nightwatchman shot dead and Serb police looting the building. The blazing printing house signalled the destruction of Albanian businesses in Pristina.

Serb paramilitaries, unaware of his identity, robbed him, leaving him on the pavement. Assuming a new name he went into hiding, sheltering in ten places over the next 11 days. On the tenth day his luck ran out. He found help in a household that was then targeted by Serb police.

He said: "From a small window in the cellar I could see the streets filling with thousands of people being expelled. I saw one young woman holding a baby... I ran out and said, 'From now on, you are my wife', thinking that as a couple we may be less conspicuous." She agreed, they found his car and joined a column of vehicles being herded by police towards Macedonia. Since arriving here, he has sought the funding to reopen his paper. Yesterday 10,000 copies were printed in Skopje — to the delight of Kosovar refugees.

"You can't imagine our joy," said Selami Zumeiri, 29, at Brazde camp.

"We have regained a link with Kosovo. It's very precious for us in the desperate situation we find ourselves in."

US angry over fleeting visit for prisoners

FROM IAN BRODIE IN WASHINGTON

THE International Red Cross was finally allowed yesterday to see the three American soldiers taken prisoner by Yugoslavia a month ago, but it was only a fleeting visit.

White House aides protested that the Belgrade visit, by Cornelio Sommaruga, the Swiss president of the International Committee of the Red Cross, fell short of internationally agreed requirements for prisoners of war, as it was held in the presence of Yugoslav officials.

It was the first time an outsider had been allowed to see the three since they were seized in unclear circumstances while patrolling the border of Macedonia and Kosovo on March 31.

Mr Sommaruga had been given assurances by the Yugoslav authorities that a doctor and other Red Cross officials would be allowed to see the soldiers for a full and private visit today, in keeping with the terms of the Geneva convention on PoWs.

He gave no indication of the men's physical condition, but when they were last seen — in a video released the day after their capture — their faces were bruised and cut. "I was able to talk to them for only a few minutes, but it was a normal talk, looking into each other's eyes and warmly shaking their hands," Mr Sommaruga said. He delivered messages from their families.

Amanda Williamson, at the International Red Cross headquarters in Geneva, said: "It's

most important for us to have a private talk, with no witnesses, in which the detainees can raise any difficulties they might have about their conditions and to give them the opportunity to send a confidential message through the Red Cross to their families."

An American demand for the soldiers' immediate release was reiterated by David Leavy, for the National Security Council. The United States says that they should not be held because they were captured in Macedonia by Yugoslav troops who had crossed the border.

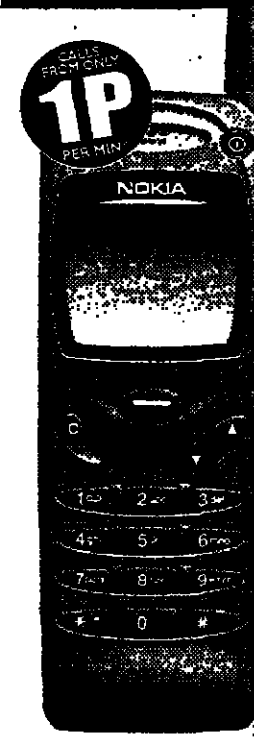
Mr Sommaruga did not raise the question of repatriation because, under international law, PoWs are liberated only at the end of active hostilities.

Still, there was a sense of relief in America that the three were alive and apparently well. On their arrest, Yugoslav authorities threatened to put them on trial, but nothing more has been heard of what would be a violation of the Geneva accords.

Mr Sommaruga also met President Milosevic to discuss the return of ethnic Albanian refugees to Kosovo, but Tanjug, the state-run Yugoslav news agency, said that Mr Milosevic had refused to discuss the matter while air raids continue.

The captives are Staff Sergeant Andrew Ramirez, 24; Staff Sergeant Christopher Stone, 25; and Specialist Steven Gonzales, 21.

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BALKANS WAR: THE NEXT STEP



The Prime Minister, now back in Britain, was criticised for his warlike stance in America where he was said to upstage President Clinton

No 10 denies Clinton put brakes on hawkish Blair

By Philip Webster and Ben Macintyre in Washington

THE Prime Minister denied yesterday that President Clinton had appealed to him last week to stop talking about ground troops in reference to the conflict over Kosovo, despite claims to the contrary in *The Washington Post*.

Downing Street sought to nip in the bud reports that when the two men had a discussion before the Nato summit, Mr Clinton had told Tony Blair to tone down his belligerent rhetoric. Asked by ABC whether the suggestion in the *Post* was true, Mr Blair replied: "No, not at all."

Yesterday he told the Commons that the summit itself had indeed discussed ground troops. What the President and Mr Blair appear to have agreed was that all questions about the use of ground troops should be covered by referring to the assessment being conducted by Javier Solana, Nato's Secretary-General, of all the options.

In an apparent recognition that previously ruling out

ground troops had helped President Milosevic, the line was to be that Nato would not discuss its military tactics and strategy in public. It was a position around which all Nato members, including the doubters, could unite.

On his return from Washington yesterday, the Prime Minister seemed not to have retreated at all from his pre-Nato position that the use of land forces against a "degraded" Milosevic machine could be contemplated. He insisted that President Milosevic had no veto on Nato actions, referring several times to the continuing build-up of forces in the area.

George Robertson, the Defence Secretary, took the same line in London yesterday. He said the decision to look at all options was a "sensible contingency measure". There was no intention to mount a wholesale invasion of Kosovo but it was "sensible to re-examine our existing plans for a ground deploy-

ment in the light of changing circumstances".

Mr Blair's hawkish stance in the United States made him the most visible figure at the summit, and he struck a more warlike posture than any other Nato leader. His tour of the television stations and the Midwest recalled Margaret Thatcher's hard-line approach. *The New York Times* noted that Mr Blair's detractors at the summit were "wondering who crowned him 'King Tony'". The conservative Republican, Pat Buchanan, an opponent of US military intervention, derided Mr Blair as "the mouse that roared. It isn't going to be British troops humping up the road to Belgrade."

Others used Mr Blair's stance to bash the White House. Senator Jesse Helms, the veteran rightwinger, hailed him as "the most eloquent leader in the Western world".

The White House insisted that Mr Clinton was not being upstaged.

Yugoslav moderate makes TV bid for peace

By Tom Walker and Michael Binyon

VUK DRASKOVIC, Yugoslavia's Deputy Prime Minister, made a dramatic tilt at peace for Kosovo yesterday. In a series of interviews, he proposed that his Government should accept UN troops in the province — on the condition that it remained part of Serbia.

Mr Draskovic, the former opposition figurehead who nearly broke the Milosevic reign in the winter of 1996, is now trying to force change from inside the regime.

He insisted yesterday that he had the backing of his president in advising the Serbs that they were deluding themselves if they thought that Russia was about to go to their rescue.

"Our destiny is in our hands to the extent to which those who lead the country have brains in their heads," he said on Studio B, a television channel controlled by his Serbian

Renewal Movement. "I do not believe there is any sense in the heads of those who are invoking World War Three and lying to the people that Russia would be involved in World War Three. The people should be told the truth: we are on our own."

Mr Draskovic said that he had been driven to his outburst by the unity shown among Nato member states at their weekend summit in Washington. He realised, he said, that hopes of a split emerging in Nato ranks were unfounded, and that Serbia and Yugoslavia had to face reality.

"We must be ready for very urgent and very brave moves towards approaching a compromise and peace based on the Charter of the United Nations," he said. Such overtures would make it clear there would be "no independent Kosovo, no great Albania in the Balkans, and no Kosovo as a third Yugoslav republic".

Analysts were divided about his chances of success. But the cracks in the Yugoslav leadership may go far deeper than the disagreements apparent from Mr Draskovic's broadcast. Government officials, diplomats and Serb exiles spoke of seething discontent with President Milosevic, and claimed that there was a threat of an coup by middle-ranking army officers to remove him.

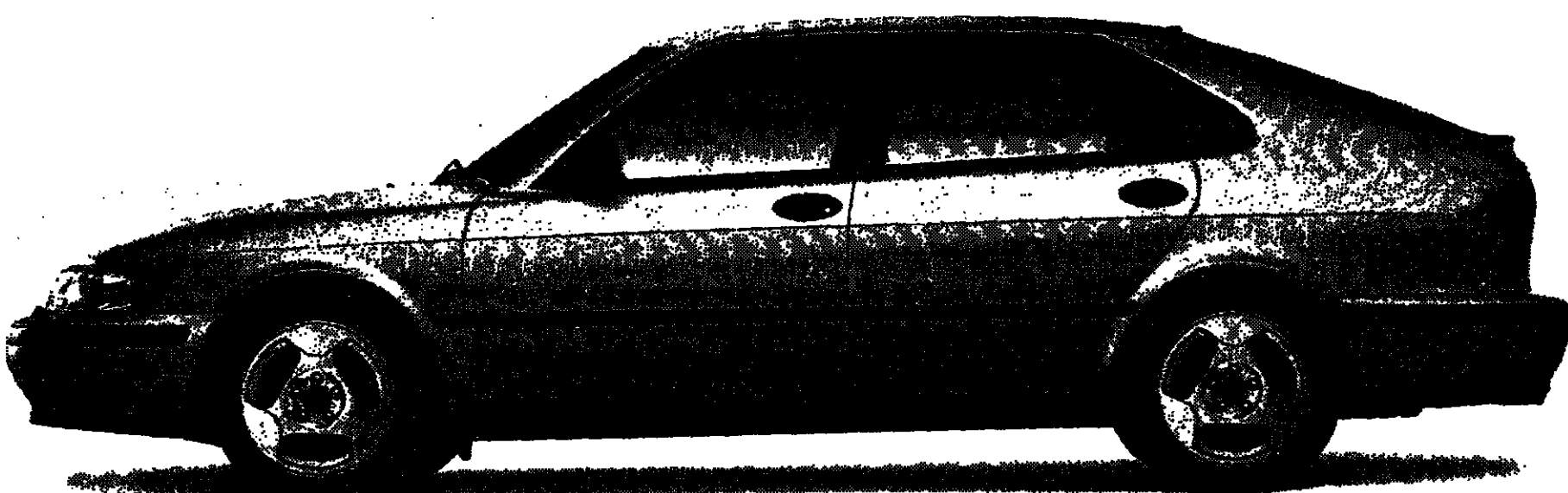
Dissident Serb exiles said that a circle of potential conspirators was ready to arrest Mr Milosevic for high treason and was waiting only for a signal by Nato.

Bratislav Grubacic, the editor of Belgrade's *VIP* newsletter, said in his column that "according to local sources, the interview is probably the result of his estimate that Milosevic will accept armed UN troops in Kosovo. Apparently, Draskovic is jockeying for position".

Mr Grubacic, one of the few independent editors brave enough to keep publishing in Belgrade, speculated that Mr Draskovic "believes he can win over a part of the police force and the army, as well as a part of the ruling party and of the entire coalition".

Most analysts agreed that Mr Draskovic was too powerful to be in danger of assassination. He has been the only politician throughout the air-strikes to court the West, and underlined that Yugoslavia was ready to accept most Western requests on Kosovo.

He recalled that Yugoslavia was one of the UN's founders and estimated the cost of the air-strikes at about £25 billion. He said that damage to the country was worse than in the Second World War.



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MAN IN THE NEWS



Author rewrote history

ONE of the most charismatic Serbian politicians of the last decade, Vuk Draskovic was at first better known as a writer (Tom Walker writes). His novels dwell on the inter-ethnic conflicts of the Herzegovina region and his book, *Knife*, has just been made into a film.

In an earlier nationalist phase, he flirted with the far Right led by Vojislav Seselj, and the two were best men to each other. Mr Draskovic now leads the Serbian Renewal Movement that spearheaded the street protests of the winter of 1996-97 against the Milosevic regime. In his latest incarnation, he is a member of the ruling coalition.

Editor flees to reopen paper in exile

Denver killers planned 'apocalypse'

THE devastation at Columbine High School last week was merely the first stage of a broad campaign of terror planned by the two teenage gunmen, it emerged yesterday. They had hoped to kill 500 pupils and teachers, take others hostage, hijack a helicopter and then an airliner, and crash-land it on a major city, officials said.

The apocalyptic scenario was set out in detail in a diary found at Eric Harris's home at the weekend. As police pre-

Teenage gunmen wanted to crash a plane filled with hostages, reports

Giles Whittell in Los Angeles

pared to question an 18-year-old girl suspected of buying guns for the boys, the lawyer who will prosecute any accomplices noted that although the plans in the diary read like "a horrible fantasy", there was little reason to doubt the killers' intentions.

"We now know that at least the first portion of those planned activities were in fact carried out," Dave Thomas, the local district attorney, told NBC yesterday. "Unfortunately, we also know that had a couple of the devices in the school detonated as planned,

the death toll could have been much higher than it was."

A detonator was discovered attached to a large propane tank in the school's catering area last Thursday, supporting police fears that Harris and Dylan Klebold wanted to blow up the school.

The details revealed yesterday, while chilling, may also help to answer mounting criticism from survivors that police SWAT teams could have saved lives by moving faster against the gunmen. Thirteen

died — as well as Harris and Klebold — many after waiting up to three hours for medical help.

The diary indicates that Harris and Klebold planned to attack nearby homes after laying waste to the school, and eventually to crash a hijacked jet, possibly on New York.

The unnamed 18-year-old due to be questioned yesterday was Klebold's girlfriend, Mr Thomas said.

Some of the guns used in the attack, which included two

shotguns, an automatic rifle and a machine pistol, were reportedly bought by her at a recent gun show.

The parents of Harris and Klebold have retained lawyers and stayed in seclusion after being strongly criticised by the local sheriff for failing to spot warning signs of the looming carnage.

Bomb-making materials and the barrel of a sawn-off shotgun were "clearly visible" in one of the teenage gunmen's bedrooms and his parents

"should have known" of the deadly plans, Sheriff John Stone said.

At a memorial service for Littleton's dead, attended by 70,000 mourners on Sunday in Denver, Vice-President Al Gore urged parents to regard the shootings as a wake-up call. "If you are a parent, your children need attention," he said. "If you are a grandparent, they need your time. If you do not have children, there are kids who need your example and presence."

Venezuela backs plan for radical reforms

By GABRIELLA GAMINI
SOUTH AMERICA
CORRESPONDENT

AFTER more than 40 years of democracy, Venezuelans have voted overwhelmingly in favour of plans by President Chávez to tear up the constitution and rebuild the nation, virtually from scratch.

Señor Chávez — a former army colonel who in 1992 led a failed coup — took office in January, vowing to rewrite a constitution that he said had allowed "corrupt and rotten" rule by a minority elite.

On Sunday Venezuelans voted in a referendum, and results released yesterday show that 92 per cent of those who turned out backed the change. And 85 per cent said they were happy with the President's wish to establish a constituent assembly (replacing Congress) to draft the new document.

His most loyal support comes from the vast majority of Venezuelans, who live below the poverty line and are convinced that the old system deprived them of a fair share of the country's oil wealth.

However, critics of Señor Chávez say the poll result fails to give him the moral authority to make the sweeping changes, only 39 per cent of the population having voted.

The opposition had said that anything less than a 50 per cent turnout would make the result invalid. The populist Señor Chávez, known for his autocratic ways and a scant regard for democratic institutions, is accused of pushing the country towards a dictatorship.

Analysts say that while the opposition still argues that the majority of Venezuelans boycotted the poll, the President has a constitutional right to go ahead.

Venezuela's democratic past has been tainted by corruption scandals, with the decision-making elite pocketing most of the early 1980s oil boom wealth. Since oil prices dropped sharply, the country has become one of South America's poorest, marked by economic upheavals and a volatile political leadership.

France's elite seek a lovable image

FROM ADAM SAGE
IN PARIS

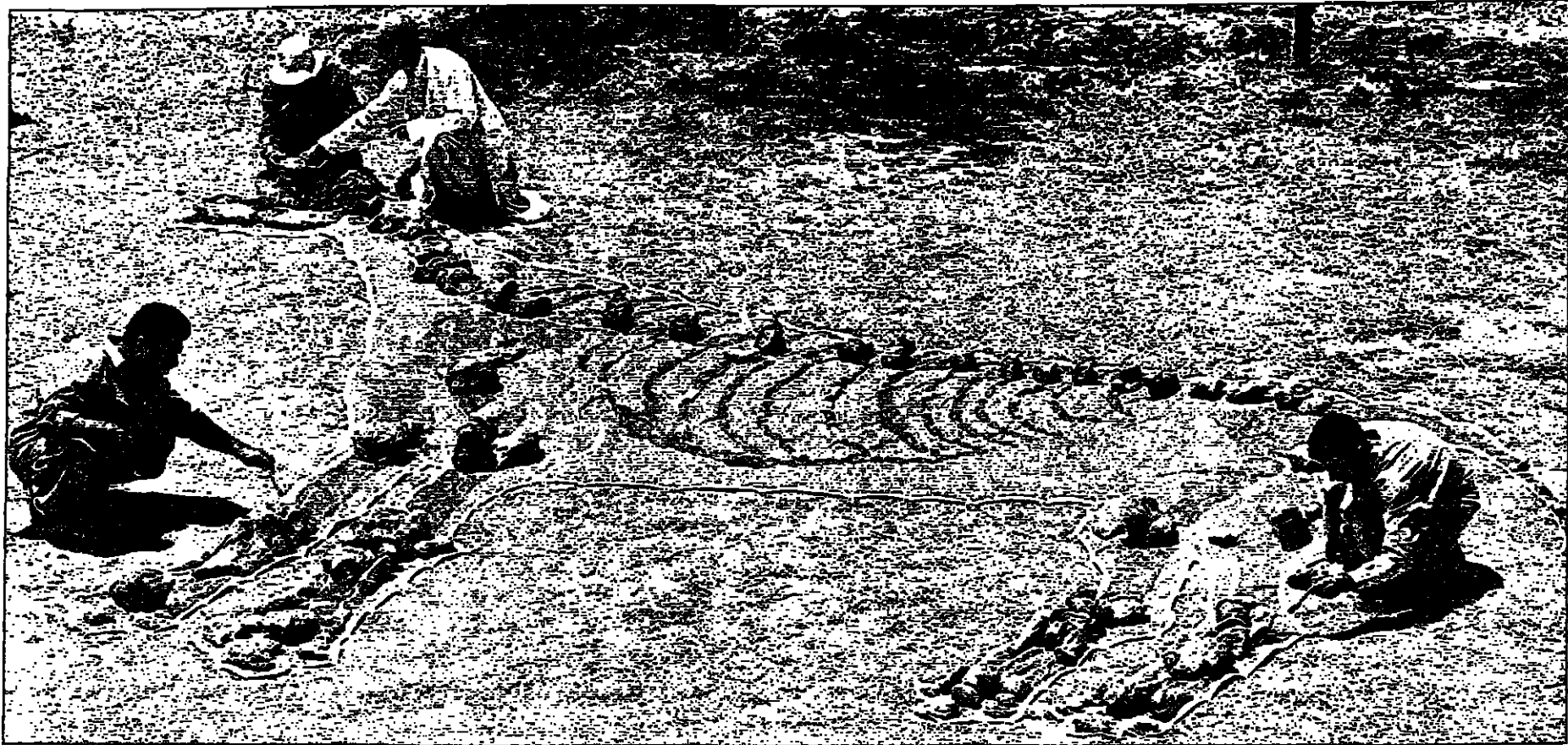
STUDENTS of France's most respected college have written to Lionel Jospin, the Prime Minister, demanding government help to end their reputation for arrogance.

The haughty tone of their letter suggests that the task may be beyond even the sweeping powers of the Prime Minister's office. The students believe they will achieve their goal if they are given less work.

This year's graduates from the elite École Nationale d'Administration, which counts President Chirac and M Jospin among its alumni, blame the packed curriculum for their bad image with the public. They enter the École full of enthusiasm "to serve their fellow citizens", they say in the letter. But this is dampened by a "course without vision or an educational project", according to the 1999 graduates.

Set up in 1945 to train France's brightest students to become high-ranking civil servants, the École is floundering, say the elite rebels. They want a return to "its original mission... to assure a democratic access to the upper civil service". The means to this end should involve a reduction in the number of "repetitive tests and courses".

Critics say the 40 or so graduates from the École each year are imbued not so much with a sense of the state's interests as with a sense of their own importance. Since a large proportion of ministers and industrial leaders are drawn from the École's graduates, they are widely blamed for the poor performance of the French economy in the 1990s.



Archaeologists arrange bones of the Beast of Baluchistan on a sketch in Dera Bugti, in Pakistan's southwestern Baluchistan province. The graveyard of the biggest terrestrial mammal, officially known as the Baluchitherium.

Remains of Beast of Baluchistan found

was found by French scientists from the University of Montpellier and the National Natural History Museum in Paris (Adam Sage

writes). Slightly resembling a rhinoceros, but without horns, the beast measured 15ft in height and weighed about 20 tonnes. The sci-

entists found the remains of 20 beasts in Baluchistan. Philippe Taquet, palaeontology professor at the Natural History Museum,

said: "The first bones belonging to this mammal were discovered in 1913, but no one has ever found skeletons as complete as these."

The beast lived about 50 million years ago, well after the dinosaurs who ruled 65 million years ago.

New York covers up mass exposure in Times Square

New York: An art photographer was hauled away in handcuffs after coaxing 150 exhibitionist New Yorkers to strip naked for a group portrait in Times Square (James Bone writes).

Spencer Turnick, who persuades people to pose nude across America for a series he calls the Naked States

tour, was arrested before he managed to take a photograph of the volunteers, who braved chilly weather shortly after dawn on Sunday to lie down on the street at the "Crossroads of the World".

Mr Turnick, who has been arrested four times previously in connection with displays of nudity in New

York and once in Paris, was charged with organising an unlawful assembly without the proper permit.

"I am an artist. I'm not your traditional photographer," he said. "I use hundreds of people to form abstract shapes in public spaces."

For this picture Mr Turnick, who remained fully clothed, asked his

nude models to point themselves in the direction of ticket booths where tourists buy cut-price seats for Broadway.

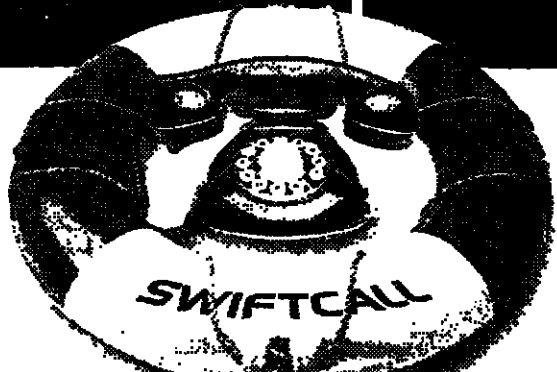
None of the nude models, who were recruited through leaflets handed out at fashionable events, was arrested.

Ronald Kuby, a campaigning law-

yer who is representing the photographer, denounced the arrest as part of a "crackdown on the quality of life and on naked people" by Rudolph Giuliani, the Mayor.

Earlier this month he ordered the arrest of a fun-seeking Norwegian who parachuted off the World Trade Centre.

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هكذا من الأصل

France's teenage firebombers barred from buying petrol

State grapples with soaring crime as bored youths turn to arson for entertainment, Adam Sage reports

FRENCH teenagers in a high-crime area near Paris were banned yesterday from buying petrol in an attempt to curb their latest fad for hurling petrol bombs at vehicles and emergency services.

The decision by Michel Thénault, prefect in the Yvelines area near Paris, is one of a series of official attempts to clamp down on a youth crime wave. His ruling comes amid

and decant the fuel into empty beer bottles. When firemen intervene to put out the resulting blazes, they are often attacked. Police officers in many regions have been told to avoid trying to arrest the offenders for fear of arousing local passions.

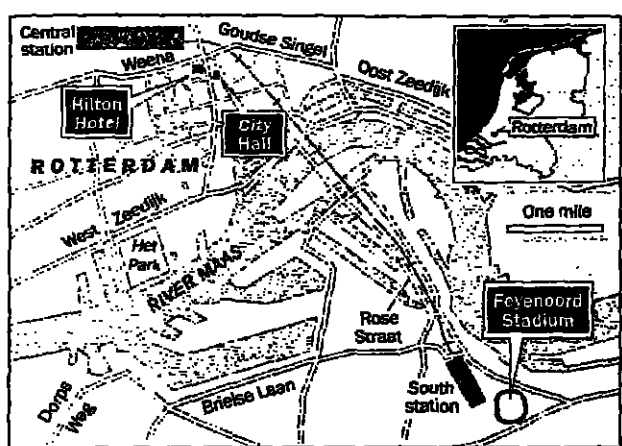
In Lyons, central France, more than 1,000 cars were set ablaze last year. In January a car exploded, severely injuring six firemen. Last week, in Yvelines, 15 vehicles were set alight. A gang of teenagers also fire-bombed a youth centre and threw a petrol bomb at a police car. In a neighbouring area another gang bombed a saloon parked outside a police station.

Officers said that it had been an ordinary week in the suburbs of Paris. "We must do something to stop this spread of criminal acts and safeguard everyone's security," M Thénault said. Yesterday's ruling makes it illegal for garages in the region to fill petrol cans belonging to anyone under the age of 18. Teenagers, however, will be able to buy fuel for their scooters, M Thénault said.

The move by the prefect — the Interior Ministry's representative in the department — reflects an increasingly desperate quest by the Government for answers to juvenile crime. Last year, when overall crime rose by 2 per cent, the number of adolescents involved jumped by 11 per cent.

Lionel Jospin, the Prime Minister, has responded to the youth crime wave by announcing that his Government would fund 50 new young offenders' institutions and place 7,000 police officers in "sensitive" regions.

But the fire brigade is calling for swifter and tougher action, claiming that officers in the suburbs now work with "fear in their bellies". The targeting of firemen has come as a surprise because in France they also constitute the country's main emergency ambulance service.



Four shot as Dutch police fire on football rioters

FROM MARK FULLER IN AMSTERDAM

POLICE in Rotterdam fired into a crowd of rioting football fans, wounding four, one critically. Another 12 people suffered injuries, including four police officers. There were 80 arrests during the rioting, on Sunday night.

A police spokesman said there was evidence that officers had come under fire before they shot at a group of 150-200 rioters, who were among the 200,000 fans in the square near the city hall celebrating Feyenoord Rotterdam's league championship victory.

It was the first time Dutch police had fired five bullets at rampaging soccer fans and marked a dark chapter in the history of soccer violence in The Netherlands.

The world has been turned on its head when police have to draw their guns like this," Bram Peper, the Interior Minister, said.

dark shadow over Dutch and Belgian preparations to co-host the European football championships next year. The final is scheduled to be held in Rotterdam.

Police suspect that the rioting was planned. Several fans were armed and there was evidence that shots had been fired at the nearby Hilton Hotel, shattering a window. Officers fired several warning shots before firing into the crowd, Mr Peper said.

Hundreds of shop windows in the centre of the Dutch port city were smashed and guests in the Hilton threw themselves on the floor to avoid a hail of broken glass.

Earlier on Sunday, tens of thousands of people had gathered outside the city hall to cheer the newly-crowned champions. As the crowd dispersed, some threw stones and bottles at police.

Mounted officers repeatedly



Police arrest a Feyenoord supporter during the Rotterdam riot that marked celebrations of the club's title success

charged rioters, and water cannon finally broke up the crowd. As the rioters dispersed, they left a trail of destruction.

"Countless shops have had their display windows smashed and contents looted and most of the parked cars have been vandalised," a photographer said, describing how rioters tore up paving stones and hurled rubbish bins at police. One of the injured officers was said to have been hit by a stone. It took a force of 750 riot police to restore order at about midnight.

Mr Peper said: "It is terrible that police were put under siege. And that they had to use weapons is crazy." He said a law was being drafted to give police powers to arrest suspected hooligans before a match.

"This was totally unacceptable. It was supposed to be a celebration, but this is the picture that people will remember," Ivo Opstelten, Rotterdam's Mayor, said.

The Dutch Football Association said the riots were "too sad for words". The association said it had asked the Rotterdam authorities for the names of those involved in the disturbances and was likely to ban them for two years from football matches.

Feyenoord supporters have long been associated with hooliganism, but the fans' club said it was baffled and ashamed.

"We had no inkling that this would happen. This has tarnished the name of Feyenoord, the city of Rotterdam and the club's supporters," a spokesman said.

LINKS
<http://www.feyenoord-fanspage.nl/> — Official supporters' club
<http://www.voodoo.demon.nl/index.html> — Feyenoord team magazine
www.livision.nl/~tvb/eng/enghome.htm — Dutch national team



The Pope fears terrorist attacks at millennium

Unemployed spies offered Vatican jobs

FROM JOHN PHILLIPS IN ROME

THE Vatican is to recruit secret agents from Western intelligence services to improve security in the Holy See and protect the Pope during the millennium celebrations.

On Saturday the Vatican's official gazette, the *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, said the tiny city state had set up a committee for security.

The Pope named Cardinal Edmund Szoka, an American, as its chairman. He will collate information on possible security threats when as many as 30 million pilgrims visit Rome for the millennium.

Vatican officials have been examining security for the arrival in St Peter's Square next Sunday of hundreds of thousands of people who will witness the Pope's beatification of Padre Pio, the Italian priest and mystic who died in 1968. The ceremony is expected to attract 375,000 people from outside Rome, and is seen by Vatican sources as a rehearsal for the Holy Year — which the Interior Ministry says could lead to terrorist attacks.

The new security committee will co-ordinate the work of the 100-strong Swiss Guard, the Pope's colourful private army, and the 120 men of the *Corpo di Vigilanza*, the Vatican's uniformed police.

Retired members of both forces will help with jubilee crowds and guard against an attack on the Pope. On May 13, 1981, Mehmet Ali Agca, a Turk, shot and seriously wounded Pope John Paul in St Peter's Square.

Franco Frattini, the chairman of the Parliamentary Committee overseeing Italy's Secret Services, announced that the Vatican would set up a counter-intelligence service. Its agents — former employees of Western spy organisations — will work with their Italian counterparts.

Signor Frattini told *Il Messaggero* newspaper: "They will have to be reliable and above all have an immaculate curriculum, because they will need to be trustworthy."

He said that agents from Sismi, Italy's military intelligence, and Sisd, the country's counter-intelligence agency, could not spy for the Pope. "I don't believe we will lend secret agents. Italian personnel cannot be put in the employ of a foreign state, not even the Vatican. I believe the

Vatican will be able to recruit and train outside operatives. The intelligence market offers highly specialised staff.

"Unemployment is rife among secret agents, especially those from Eastern Europe, though I do not suppose the Vatican will want to recruit former KGB or Stasi agents."

"Those people excluded, the Vatican will have to find people with an adequate résumé to have worked in the Western world. Those are the basic conditions for being able to co-ordinate with our OOVs."

Intelligence experts at the Palazzo Chigi, the office of the Italian Prime Minister, would liaise with the Holy See to ensure the Vatican selected people who would not endanger Italy's security, said Signor Frattini.

WORLD IN BRIEF

Kremlin rocked by hotel blast

Moscow: Ten people were hurt yesterday when an explosion ripped through a hotel just yards from the Kremlin, spraying the busy Tverskaya boulevard with glass and debris. Police, special forces and Federal Security Service agents sealed off the immediate area around the Intourist Hotel, pushing back crowds of office workers, tourists and journalists. Although officials at the scene refused to comment on the blast, a Moscow police spokeswoman said it had been caused by a 2lb explosive charge in a service lift on the 20th floor. Officials said that President Yeltsin was not in the Kremlin at the time of the blast, which one parliamentary aide said was audible in the nearby Duma. (AFP)

New Indian election

President Narayanan dissolved India's lower house of parliament, paving the way for a third general election in three years after the failure of the main opposition Congress party to form a new government (Michael Binyon writes). The order came hours after the outgoing Hindu nationalist Government of Atal Bihari Vajpayee called for a dissolution. On Sunday Sonia Gandhi, the Congress party leader, ruled out a minority government with the understanding of other opposition parties.

Cairo frees militants

Nicosia: Egypt has freed more than 1,000 Islamic militants in the biggest such prisoner release since fundamentalists launched an armed campaign to topple President Mubarak's pro-Western Government seven years ago (Michael Theodorou writes). All were members of al-Gamaa al-Islamiya, the Islamic group that said last month that it was halting all armed operations. Defence lawyers welcomed the move as a conciliatory gesture that would help to reduce tension and violence.

Pay rise for Euro MPs

Luxembourg: British MEPs will enjoy a £3,000 annual pay rise under an accord by European Union ministers that aims to clean up the gray-train image of the European Parliament (Charles Bremner writes). The ministers set a standard annual salary of £47,700, ending the system by which members received the same as MPs in their national legislatures. The sum is about £3,000 higher than for a member of the House of Commons. The package also restricts their expenses claims.

Palestinian 'UDI' talks

Jerusalem: The Palestinian Central Council will begin a session in Gaza today to decide whether to implement earlier threats by Yasser Arafat to declare an independent Palestinian state on May 4, the end of the five-year autonomy period agreed at Oslo (Christopher Walker writes). Mr Arafat's supporters were under international Israeli pressure to defer the decision, at least until after the Israeli election on May 17, and possibly for months longer, to allow the stalled peace talks a new chance.

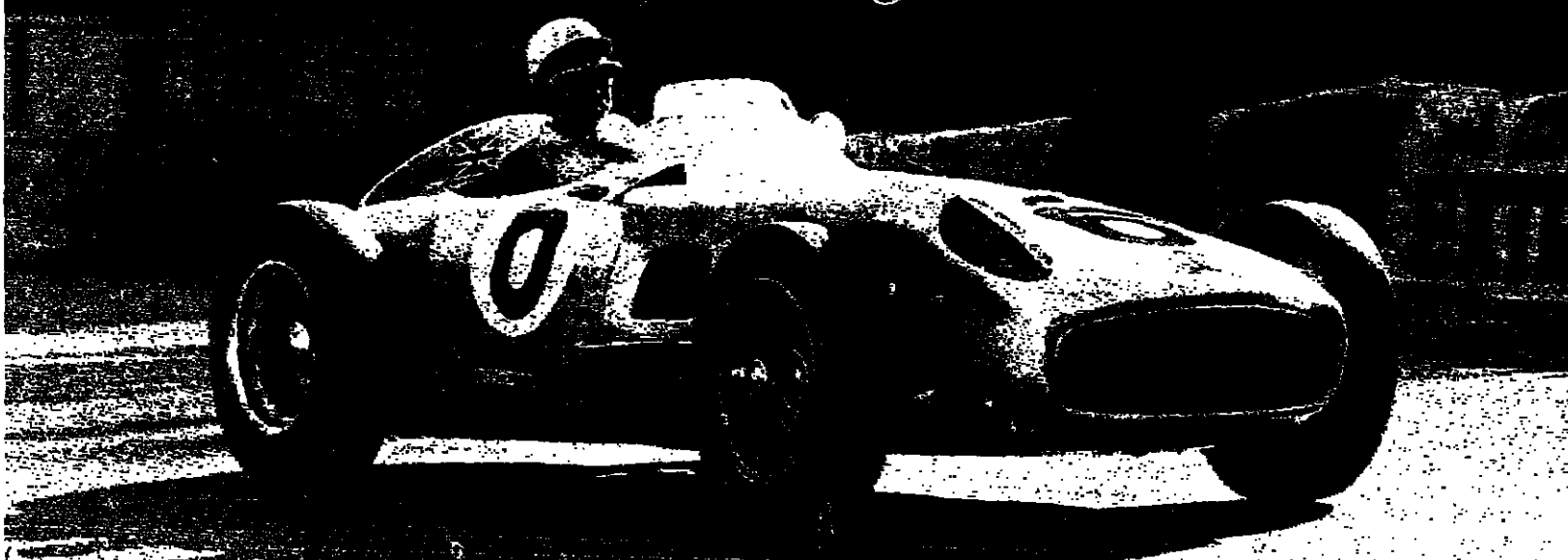
Pavarotti tax bill

Rome: Luciano Pavarotti owes the Italian tax authorities about £1.5 million, according to a Finance Ministry report. Magistrates rejected an appeal by the tenor, who insisted that his main residence was in Monaco. They said the address in Monte Carlo was only a formal one and could not accommodate the singer's entire family, who, the ministry said, lived in the northern Italian town of Modena. (AFP)

Berezovsky charged

Moscow: Boris Berezovsky, the tycoon with business links to President Yeltsin's daughter, has been charged with money laundering and barred from leaving the capital while under investigation. Mr Berezovsky, left, at the prosecutor's office, is accused of smuggling hard-currency profits from Aeroflot to a shell company he had set up in Switzerland. (AFP)

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She could have been your sister

Grace Bradberry on why the death of Jill Dando has affected so many people

A brutal death is always shocking. But Jill Dando's is shocking in the way that the violent death of a neighbour would be, or the arrest of the local vicar for armed robbery. She was successful precisely because you felt that she could have been your sister or your best friend; and therein lies the reason so many feel so affected by her murder — it is utterly unlikely and disturbingly close to home.

"She was extraordinary in her ordinariness," was how Leslie Fike, the chairman of Weston Hospicecare, put it yesterday, and that view has been repeated, in different words, by friends and colleagues alike. "A very uncomplicated star," was Alan Yentob's tribute. "A natural human being," said the TV producer Chris Denham, adding that Dando was the perfect dinner party guest. Hundreds of thousands of people around the country could imagine having Dando to dinner. Hundreds of thousands more could imagine dropping round to borrow a cup of sugar from her. In one survey she was voted the neighbour the British public would most like to have.

So we all understood when John Humphrys yesterday described himself as "inarticulate" with shock. "It's the oldest cliché in the book, but she just was an ordinary person," he added. "She wasn't carried away by her fame. Too many people, if they are on the box often enough, start to believe in their own publicity. It didn't happen to Jill." There was something vaguely incongruous about the appearance of Kate Adie, the hotshot reporter, being dispatched to Dando's street yesterday.

She was murdered in the doorway of her home in Fulham, southwest London, and found by a neighbour. Another neighbour thought that the killing must have taken place as she was hosting a coffee morning. However, chichi Fulham may be (and Dando lived in the suburban part, not the starry bit), it is a neighbourhood. You would never have imagined Jill Dando moving into a loft in Clerkenwell, a portered flat in Kensington or a stronghold on the Wentworth Estate — although she had been successful enough to afford any of those places (she was reported to have signed a £500,000 two-year deal with the BBC).

"I don't lead a very show-biz life," she admitted in a recent interview with *Hello!* magazine. She did not employ

a secretary to answer her mail. She enjoyed the cinema and shopping. She liked to go out to dinner with friends. She had met her fiancé Alan Farningham, a gynaecologist, through friends — not at a celebrity party, an establishment dinner or the home of some rich and famous acquaintance. Colleagues gave testimony to how much in love with him she was, how thrilled by the prospect of their forthcoming wedding. Yes, she was good-looking: Nick Ross, with whom she co-presented *Crimewatch UK*, says that she turned heads wherever they went, but her looks were somehow ordinary.

She was like most of us, rather cautious at heart

Condolence books are being opened at the BBC and the switchboards have been flooded with calls from the public — echoing "the people's" response to the death of another "ordinary star", Diana, Princess of Wales. Part of this feeling no doubt comes down to the length of time that both women spent

in our living rooms, smiling at us from a box in the corner. Dando fronted some of the BBC's most popular programmes — not only *Crimewatch UK*, but also *Breakfast Time*, the *Six O'Clock News* and the *Holiday* show, which she left after seven years, tired of touring the world. To publicise her latest project — presenting BBC1's *Antiques Inspection* — she dressed in black leather for the cover of *Radio Times*. The pictures caused a ripple of pleasurable astonishment. She was talked into it, you surmise — though there is no proof of this, and Dando certainly had gumption.

A bespectacled and serious schoolgirl, Dando had the kind of protected, provincial upbringing that lots of people (myself included) enjoyed — but which somehow isn't fashionable, or even usual, among the metropolitan media elite. She grew up in the seaside town of Weston-super-Mare and, though she was given a life-saving heart operation at the age of three, the rest of her early life was unremarkable. Out of school her social life centred on the church youth group. Until she was 22 she had not even been abroad.

She was only 24 when her mother, to whom she had been incredibly close, died of leukaemia. She once admitted that had her mother still been alive — such was the bond — that she might never have accepted her first job in London.



Jill Dando, the television presenter, who was murdered yesterday. "The person you saw on screen was the same as the person off screen. That lack of affectation came through"



Dando with her fiancé Alan Farningham

It was there that her life really took off. She lived with her *Breakfast News* boss, 52-year-old Bob Wheaton, for six years until the relationship ended in January 1997. The catalyst was a holiday romance with a

game-warden named Simon Basil, whom she met on a safari for the *Holiday* programme. She said the romance marked a more go-getting phase in her life. Although Dando reaped the rewards we associate with risk-taking, she was, in fact — like most of the rest of us — rather cautious at heart.

The absence of outrage provoked some commentators to describe her as bland. Last year a tabloid staged a debate between two writers, with one insisting that she could barely distinguish Dando from Sophie Rhys-Jones (a common comparison that irritated the television presenter), and the other, a man, comparing her to the heavy heroines of John Betjeman's poems. Betjeman was the poet of middle-class, suburban England, which is so appropriate because among this constitu-

cy Dando was everything you could wish for in a public figure: beautiful, warm, trustworthy, unpretentious. Viewers believed what Nicholas Witchell yesterday confirmed: "The person you saw on screen was the same as the person off screen." That was part of the reason for her success. In 1997 she was voted BBC Personality of the Year. No one was surprised when she was widely predicted to be the BBC's millennium night presenter.

Yet the question that comes to mind when you think of Dando's death is not "how could this happen to such a famous, successful person?" but "how could this happen to someone like us, in a street like ours?" Whatever nightmares we might have experienced after watching Dando and Ross on *Crimewatch UK*, most non-domestic murders happen to young working-class men. They occur on drug-ridden housing estates, or outside the rougher pubs and nightclubs. They don't happen to Jill Dando in Fulham.

The struggle to beat a cycle of violence

Ismail Zakuti spends his days playing basketball on a patch of ground close to the gates at Brazzaville. In his home town of Pristina he witnessed beatings, saw young men led away by the Serb police, and came across the bodies of three men lying murdered in a garage. He is only 15. This is still his childhood — or should be.

Even during war Kosovo's children must have rights, says Grace Bradberry

set out for Macedonia, accompanying Mike Aaronson, director-general of Save the Children, I assumed that these aims would be relatively easy to accomplish in Europe. Not so.

Rather than running camps in the region, the charity is engaged in projects which include tracing children and parents who have become separated (in which is specialises), distributing "family packs" to refugees living outside the camps, and providing medical aid in the region. All these programmes were going well.

Yet every refugee child I spoke to mentioned school as the thing they really missed from their former lives. The charity has recruited 20 teachers from among the refugees, it has an education programme — but it has no tent in which to set up class.

Two other aims are closer to home: it wants an end to the physical punishment of children and to tackle the poverty which the charity believes leads to violence.

Most important of all, the organisers of the campaign want to jog us out of our collective complacency.

That children have rights beyond food and shelter was one of the basic beliefs of Eglantyne Jebb, the founder of Save the Children. She established the charity in 1919, after she witnessed the suffering of children in the aftermath of the Balkan War and the First World War. "Every year is a war against the child," she said afterwards. In 1923 she published a document called *The Rights of the Child*, which became enshrined in the 1989 United Nations convention on the rights of the child.

Among other things the convention guarantees children a good education, leisure activities and an adequate standard of living. These might be difficult to achieve in Africa, but when I

For that it is reliant on the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the lead agency. The UNHCR is still struggling to provide tents for the influx of refugees, and appears to be facing obstruction from the Macedonian authorities.

Gazing round at the desolate faces in one of the smaller camps, Mike Aaronson says: "There's a lack of imagination being shown here. The Macedonians are being allowed to dictate what happens to these refugees. But these are people with certain rights. The Macedonian Government has signed all the conventions — it needs to be reassured that it won't be left with the burden."

However, turning the words of conventions into a reality in the lives of Kosovo refugees will take an act of will on the part of countries throughout Europe.

How to tape obesity's measure

People who worry about their weight have made a trip to the bathroom scales the second most urgent task each morning. There is now a simpler regime and a tape measure is all that is needed.

Once the girth of the waist is known doctors should have an immediate idea whether they are dealing with a prob-

lem of obesity and, if so, how bad it is. A few years ago, doctors were apt to measure waist and hip girth and the ratio of the two was found to reveal any obesity and therefore a likelihood of developing the diseases associated with it. However, patients looked rather surprised when their, possibly previously remote, doctor went down like a tailor

on his or her knees, produced a tape measure and recorded the size of their tummy and bottom.

It has now been shown that a simple waist measurement is all that is needed to assess obesity. Women should have a waist measurement of not more than 32in (80cm) and men 37in (94cm). As long as they keep within these parameters, they don't have to worry too much about having pudding. Doctors will start to get concerned about a female patient if her waist measurement reaches 35in (88cm) or a man has a waistband of 40in (102cm) or above.

Doctors good at mental arithmetic still like to work out the BMI (the body mass index), which is calculated by dividing the patient's weight in kilograms by his or her height in metres squared. If the BMI is more than 25, the patient has exceeded the recommended calculation and is considered overweight; if more than 30, he or she is technically obese and if the figure is more than 40, grossly obese.

Professor Michael Lean, Professor of Human Nutrition at Glasgow University, has written a book *Clinical Handbook of Weight Management* which, although it includes all the science of nutrition, is admirably concise and easy to understand. It is intended for health professionals but it would supply any interested lay person with the facts and figures behind any campaign to lose weight and explains the reasons why doctors are so concerned about excessive weight.

Professor Lean makes the very important point that in Western society the aspiration of the great majority of people, male and female, is to be thin. If they are overweight, they are not only depressed about being fatter than their contemporaries, but have a sense of failure because they have tried to take their weight in hand and have dinnally capitulated at the sight of cream cakes. Conversely, in parts of West Africa, it is still smart for men to be lean, but women are admired for their obesity.

A new drug, Xenical, is available for the appreciably overweight or those who, if merely overweight, already have health problems. It is likely to work only if a patient has the strength of will to cut his or her fat intake. It will transform drug therapy in obesity even though the history of drugs in the treatment of the overweight has been both disappointing and dangerous.

Medication can have only a very limited use when dieting has failed. It is to be expected that Xenical will be the treatment of choice for those who cannot adapt their lifestyle and will thereby improve life expectancy. Xenical is effective because it prevents the absorption of fat and, naturally enough, if fat is not absorbed it cannot contribute calories to increase the waistband.

Doctors confronted by a seriously overweight patient think in terms of the increased mortality from cardiovascular causes, in particular a rise in blood pressure which carries with it the greater likelihood of strokes, coronary thromboses, an enlarged heart and eventually, heart failure.

The doctors will also worry about other conditions which are associated with obesity, in particular non-insulin dependent diabetes, so-called Type 2 diabetes which can be responsible for so much ill-health in later life. Other problems of

being overweight may not be as life-threatening but can cause arthritic knees, loss of tenh, breathlessness, incontinence, infertility and menstrual irregularity and, if the patient has any coronary heart disease, angina.

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Fat is essential for the absorption of some vitamins and in some cases additional vitamins may be needed. The excretion of additional fat may cause "tummy upsets" and sore perianal skin. This encourages patients to cut their fat intake and to have three similar-sized meals each day, rather than one heavy, fatty meal in the evening.

• Clinical Handbook of Weight Management is published by Martin Duniz at £14.95

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GEORGE WALDEN: MEMOIRS OF AN ANTI-POLITICIAN

The FO was worse than Yes, Minister

In the second extract from his memoir, George Walden describes the intricate euphemisms he had to learn as a diplomatic go-between

1979: MY FIRST day working for David Owen went as badly as it could. It began with a breakfast with the then deputy US Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, whom President Carter had dispatched to London to confer over one of the hottest issues of the day: the deployment of the neutron bomb in Europe. The attraction of the weapon, so to speak, was that it did more damage to military personnel than to buildings. As I told Christopher when we met again years later, after he had served as Clinton's first Secretary of State and I had become a politician, that though it was never to be deployed, the neutron bomb damned nearly did for me.

The breakfast took place in the Foreign Secretary's official residence. Only Owen, Christopher and I were present. It was my first experience of working breakfasts and I was perhaps not as alert as I might have been. Though interested in their conversation, if only because my knowledge of nuclear affairs was so much less than theirs, I concentrated on the magnificent English breakfast — bacon and egg, mushrooms, tomatoes, kippers — a feast after my Parisian coffee and croissants. As the exchanges, so technical they seemed to me to be encoded, went back and forth — Owen, a former minister at the MoD, seemed horribly expert on the details — it crossed my mind that instead of relying on memory, I should be making a note, so as to discover at my leisure what ALCMs, SLCMs and GLCMs and suchlike might be (air, submarine and ground-launched cruise missiles). Deciding that scribbling at table

DAVID OWEN

in such an intimate gathering would be impolite, I cocked an ear to the conversation while concentrating on my breakfast. Not understanding what the talk was about, recording it would also have been difficult. After a couple of hours' intense conversation, Christopher went his way. I had enjoyed the meal, picked up useful knowledge and assumed that this was the end of my day's work. I was wrong. As Owen, in a hurry to get to his Plymouth constituency, stalked to the door, where his wife and children were waiting, he fired instructions at me till the moment he got into the car. The suggestion seemed to be that I should send a top-secret minute to the Prime Minister, over his name, reporting the conversation, which he clearly saw as important, that afternoon. He emphasised that the discussion was hypersensitive and that knowledge be restricted to a tiny circle: the Defence Secretary, Denis Healey, and a handful of nuclear specialists.

It was the worst afternoon of my diplomatic career. I was alone in the Foreign Office. I needed to talk to a nuclear expert, quickly, and on a secret line. I looked at my telephone. There were four, two of them studded with mysterious buttons, scramblers, I presumed. I thought of phoning Owen in his constituency, on the pretext

of refining a few details, then remembered that whereas I had a scrambler I could not use, he was unlikely to have one at all. When I went for a pee in the Foreign Secretary's private lavatory (I hadn't discovered where our own were), I studied the antique plumbing for a long time, as if the answer to my predicament lay in the configuration of the pipes. I returned to find No 10 on the line, asking when the Prime Minister could expect a report of Owen's conversation. Having discovered who was and was not in the charmed circle, I called two experts in. Between us we reconstructed the sort of conversation about the neutron bomb Owen ought to have had with Christopher (the difficulty being that Owen was notorious for having his own ideas on policy). Eventually a minute was duly concocted and sent to No 10. I got home late that evening, fearful that my first contribution to serious diplomacy would bring about a transatlantic misunderstanding over nuclear weapons, and feeling faintly sick.

Under pressure you learn quickly, and there were few Foreign Secretaries capable of keeping the pressure as high as David Owen. Everything was done against the clock, and if you didn't stay cool you would go to pieces. The pressure on the private secretary came from two sides: ministers and diplomats. A policy recommendation would be

I focused on the great breakfast rather than the talks



Walden with Pierre Mauroy (later Prime Minister of France) and David Owen: "Few Foreign Secretaries could keep the pressure as high as Owen"

called for and a Foreign Office official far senior to myself would "walk it in" to the private office, partly for speed, partly to impress on me that it was up to me to sell the line to the Foreign Secretary. If I pointed out that David Owen was particularly resistant to that line of argument, the response was that I would need

to be particularly persuasive. The toughest diplomacy, I was learning the hard way, begins at home.

Once the Foreign Secretary had agreed — or altered — the line, sometimes after urgent meetings, you wrote a letter to the Prime Minister's diplomatic adviser in No 10 — at the time it was Bryan Cartledge:

"Dear Bryan, the Foreign Secretary is minded... I would be grateful for the Prime Minister's concurrence..." Always say "is minded" rather than "has decided", which pre-empt the Prime Minister's choice in the matter, and never use English words when a Latin one is available. In matters of state the agreement of

the PM was not enough — you needed his concurrence. Then the line-selling would begin again, though this time, I was the seller. If my opposite number in No 10 rang to say that my letter wouldn't wash, the Prime Minister being especially resistant to that line of argument, well, I would retort, that is why the Foreign Secre-

tary was relying on you to put it to him persuasively. Compared with the reality, it struck me later, as a comedy. Yes, Minister was understated.

Extracted from *Lucky George* by George Walden, published by Penguin on May 6. £17.99; available to Times readers for £15, p.p.p., from The Times Bookshop, 0900 134450.

A room full of fear

SADDAM HUSSEIN

IN 1980 Lord Carrington and I went to see Saddam Hussein. The Iran-Iraq War was raging and Baghdad bristled with weaponry. In the guest palace where we stayed a good-looking female soldier sat at the end of our corridor, a sub-machinegun over her lap, like a male fantasy figure in a bad movie. In Saddam's outer office his assistants wore knives as well as pistols in their belts. As we were about to go in for our audience one of them signalled towards my briefcase. On no account could I take it into the meeting with the President, presumably since I clearly intended to blow up Saddam. Carrington and myself. The more I argued, the more the tough guy insisted: the briefcase had to stay outside.

Under duress I acquiesced: there was nothing inside except my notepads and the spare toothbrush and extra pair of socks I had learnt to carry with me at all times.

The talks proved a memorable occasion, not for anything that was said but for the atmosphere in the room. In those years of continent-roaming I met some less than clean-living gentlemen: thugish African generals, Gal-berish South Americans, drug-running Caribbean ministers, or dictators such as Ceausescu of Romania, the tic in whose left eye made you feel that, should someone mistake it for a command, heads might roll. Yet in terms of movie-style villainy, the Iraqi President was the star. Meeting Saddam was like making a call on Bugsy Malone. He and his entourage looked



Askew: Saddam Hussein

and behaved like the sub-Chicago gangsters they have proved to be.

While in the colour of fear and there was no lack of it in the room. Saddam was dressed in white suit and silver tie, offset by a missile-sized cigar. When he smiled, teeth like bleached gravestones appeared beneath the macho moustache. The pallid complexion of his entourage's faces betrayed terror, for the President was in capricious mood. After the introductory affabilities he frowned, complaining that the atmosphere in the room was stuffy — hardly surprising given the fug got up by his cigar. Instantly a minion leapt for a window and pawed at it fruitlessly: it was sealed tight, for security reasons, I presumed.

The high point came at the end of the meeting, when there was an official photograph. The photographer, an Iraqi, lined us up round the still-sitting President. As he was about to take his snap the photographer paused, studying the President nervily: he had noticed that Saddam's tie was askew and was wondering what to do about it. Finally, not daring to ask him to straighten it, he put his camera aside, got down on his belly, crawled towards him and, while the mobster President smiled on, reached up beneath the white suit and tweaked the tie into place. After that scene nothing Saddam Hussein has said or done since has surprised me.

POWELL, BENN, FOOT

AS A NEW MP I watched the performances of many people on both sides of the House with awe. The least impressive, it seemed to me, were Enoch Powell, Tony Benn and Michael Foot — seen then as the three great parliamentarians of the time.

To them I listened with distaste. What struck me was how much they had in common. All were burning patriots who had done precious little for their country in their long parliamentary careers and, each in his way, a deal of harm.

Powell appealed to bigotry and was to find his spiritual home in the rancid politics of Northern Ireland. Foot and Benn, contrary to right-wing belief, were no Marxists. Marxism demanding a degree of intellectual discipline, but self-indulgent patriots. All were essentially small

men affecting the postures of great ones. All were fiery orators and intellectual mountebanks (Foot's book on H.G. Wells and Powell's cranky theories on the Gospels were laughed to scorn by expert critics). All were Europhobes and Americanophobes, strop Little Englanders who, in so far as they were known at all, enjoyed no status or respect beyond our shores.

All had quirky mannerisms and passionate convictions, and none of them had judgment. Powell, Foot and Benn, I reflected as I watched their stately orations and listened to their histrionic voices, commanded attention because they played on Parliament's fatal nostalgia and its capacity to mistake the sedulously antiquated fake for the original. When there are no fish, as the saying goes, even the crayfish are fish.

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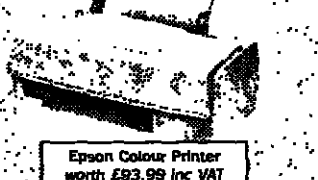
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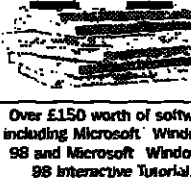
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A striptease that costs too much

The Tories' gyration to Hey Big Spender is just embarrassing

Of all the curious places in which politicians now find themselves, whether on *This Morning* with Richard and Judy or a Thai massage parlour in Northampton, no location is as undignified as being "in the centre".

Where is this centre? It seems to be where the lowest common denominator and the highest possible public spending meet. And that is never the same place from one day to the next. The centre, like a dune in the desert, is a landmark that shifts as time, nature and the imprint of man do their work. The centre certainly shifted between 1979 and 1990. First the Tory party, and then Britain, followed the footprints of one woman out of the wilderness.

Because it is not a settled habitation, the centre is, like the sands of the Sahara, an arid region where no principles can take root, no institution can be sure of its foundation, no banner can be firmly placed. For that reason, it is a particularly shameful place for politicians to be.

It is possible to be principled yet showy, and find oneself on daytime television. It is possible to be politically principled yet personally fallible and find oneself in an East Midlands jacuzzi with a lady of easy virtue. But it is no more possible to head for the centre and keep one's principles than it is to feel comfortable in a jacuzzi while fully clothed. The natural inhabitants of the centre are those politicians of easy virtue, happy to massage public opinion but never to challenge it.

In the past week, the Conservatives have attempted to shift towards the centre, directed by their focus groups and ditching their Thatcherite clothing on the way. Last Tuesday Peter Lilley declared that Tories must "openly and emphatically accept that the free market has only a limited role in improving public services like health, education and welfare".

Really? As Lord Young, Mr Lilley's former colleague in Mrs Thatcher's Government, put it last Friday: "The only discipline that really works in the long run is the market. Any thought that any government can run public services without the stimulus of the market is self-delusion. Ask any Russian."

But the Conservatives prefer to ask their focus groups. They treat them as showgirls treat the audience in a lap-dancing bar, seeking approval by discarding their old garments. But they have tossed into the corner, like an unwanted brassiere, one of the last things that gave them solid support and kept them respectable.

They have forfeited fixed principles for fleeting attention. By admitting, as Mr Lilley did, that his speech was informed by "all the opinion polling evidence", he lost one of the few clear advantages the Tories had over Labour — the view that Conservatives were people of conviction and Blairites creatures of calculation.

Mr Lilley and his colleagues hope, however, that the real change in public perception will be the transformation of

the Tories into the party of the public sector. To which one can only ask, has Mr Lilley heard of a man called John Major? The last Tory Prime Minister, a description which is beginning to sound like an epitaph, spent his entire premiership trying to make the Conservatives look like the public sector's sugar daddies.

From the unveiling of the Citizen's Charter to the election pledge to increase NHS spending above inflation, the Major administration sprayed cash at the public sector. Almost the first act of that Government was a public spending spree intended to show that it cared. And where did it all end? In tax increases, broken promises and humiliation at the polls.

The Tories did not lose in 1997 because they failed to emphasise their commitment to the public sector. They lost because they debauched the public finances in pursuit of the "centre ground" and added to the pain by clinging to another tad of the centre, the ERM. The Tories won the four elections before 1997, even though opinion polls suggested that Labour was more trusted on the public services, because the Conservatives believed that small government and low taxes were superior to more government and higher taxes. Not just more popular but morally superior.

There are four types of spending. You can spend your own money on yourself. You can spend your own money on other people. You can spend other people's money on you. And, finally, you can spend other people's money on other people. Unsurprisingly, the spender in the last category cares least about how the money is spent.

This is, of course, how the State spends money. Which is why it was mistaken of William Hague to have argued in *The Times* last week that the Tories can avoid seeming "uncaring" by supporting the state supply of taxpayer-funded services. If you measure "caring" by how much you take from the taxpayer to give to the public sector, then let's salute the biggest-hearted leader of 'em all, Uncle Joe Stalin.

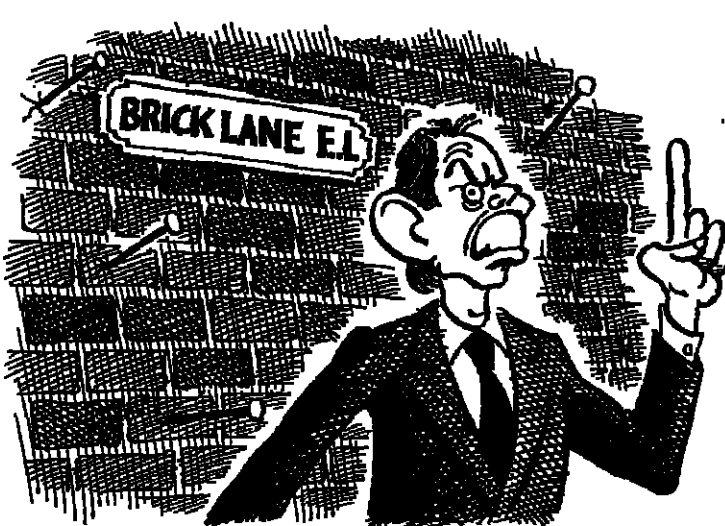
Governments don't care, people do. By empowering people, as parents and patients, the services they care about improve. The Shadow Chancellor, Francis Maude, promised last night that he would spend as much as Gordon Brown on health and education, but would spend it better. I am sure he would. But not as well as freer citizens liberated by a smaller state. As Mr Maude pointed out last October, "it is always the soft option to accede to every apparently worthy spending lobby".

It is indeed soft, and warm, to sink into the sands of the centre. But when the sands shift, where does that leave you? Unnoticed in the wilderness. Which is where the Tories will be until they once again explain why, and how, the State could be smaller.

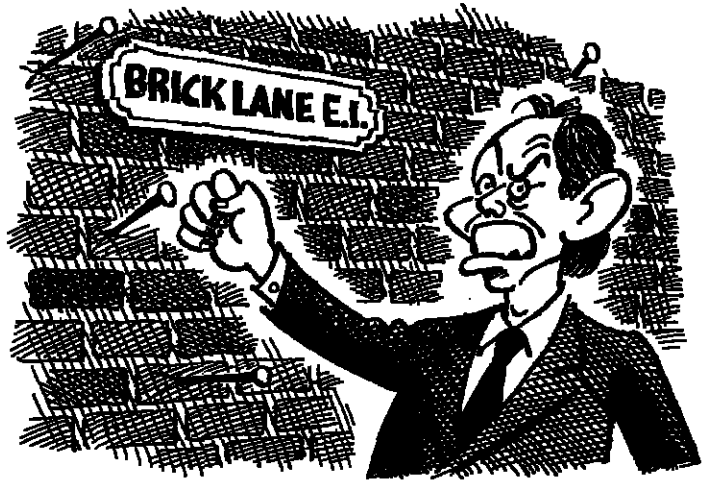
michael.gove@the-times.co.uk



Michael Gove



"ANY BOMBING CAMPAIGN..."



STIFFENING THE PUBLIC'S RESOLVE...



WILL SUCCEED ONLY IN...



TO RESIST THE... ER... BOMBERS."

Welcome or be damned

Britain's reluctance to accept more Kosovan refugees is shameful

Four weeks ago, in a rant against the Nato bombing, I wrote that when it ended — or if it didn't — we hawk nations would find ourselves with inescapable duties to Kosovan Albanians: protection, support, resettlement. I said that if we want to emerge from this fiasco with any honour at all, we will have to open our doors to the refugees whose doom we hastened, and smile as we do it. These are our people now, and we owe them.

"Come back to that theme," advised a drily mocking e-mail from Kent. "You'll need to. Have you read our local papers lately?" I looked up what she meant: the famous *Dover Express* tirade about Romanian Gypsies, under the heading *Scroungers Incorporated*: "We want to wash the gross down the drain... illegal immigrants, asylum-seekers... while Labour luvvies drive on, we are left with the backdraft of a nation's human sewage." My correspondent also directed me to the *Folkestone Herald* article alleging that "Slovak prostitutes sell their bodies for the price of a potato: 'The blouses are coming off as refugee 'potato patch dollies' are winning their own version of the war of the under-worlds."

Local newspapers do not print such things for fun: they know their readership and get a lot of letters. In parts of Kent, windows have been smashed and walls daubed with "We will burn you out". It would be nice to think that things will be different for Kosovan families escaping from a widely televised hell; it would be comfortable to believe that the smelters and daubers represent only a tiny minority of yobs and that better-educated Britain will be uniformly generous towards the Kosovans.

But I wouldn't lay any large bets on it. Among my flood of correspondence lately has come a trickle along the lines of this, from a very prosperous address: "You may moralise, Miss Purves, about our so-called 'duty' to refugees from this distant country whose people Nato is already trying bravely to help — but do we really want more of these women in headscarves, stretching out their begging hands? Are sentimentalists like you aware of how unpleasant it is to shop in Knightsbridge, with this constant importuning by greedy foreign gypsies with their bras?"

Altogether, it was a relief to see

and get them back to their homes as soon as possible. A Home Office spokesman smoothly says that mass evacuation would be "doing Milosevic's work for him". The failure so far of America — that vast, rich nation — to welcome one single refugee of its latest war is justified by the claim that it is too far away. "Our aim is to help them go home."

Yet they are not going home, not for ages. Even if the undead of breakthrough brings a peaceful new regime to Yugoslavia next week and miraculously converts the Serbian militia en masse to tolerance, much of Kosovo will not be fit to live in for years. The idea that it is sensible to keep hundreds of thousands of people trapped in mud, and squalor, and cold, and danger, and near-starvation just to avoid "doing Milosevic's work for him" is ridiculous.

The party who arrived in Leeds had not eaten hot food or washed properly for a fortnight. The theory that this sad population must be kept physically close to its home is 50 years out of date. It is not as if they had to migrate by ocean liner: this is not the Highland Clearances or the Spanish Civil War. These people have already done the hard bit of the journey, trudging across the mountains. Three hours in an aeroplane seat would get them anywhere in Europe, and back again just as easily when (if) it is all over. A few more hours and they could be fed and comforted in Ohio or New England. If we can move bombs around to suit our "humanitarian" ideals, then we can damn well move some people around, too. The Macedonian Government begged us to weeks ago, as it tottered under the impact of an influx equivalent to one sixth of its population. "Don't send blankets," said its spokesman. "Send empty planes. Please. Fly them to Britain or America." It

really was not an unreasonable request. Yet our Government continues to behave with an ambiguity that it is taking me all my self-control not to link directly to a political fear of the xenophobic daubers and letter-writers. Despite the experience of Bosnia, it steadfastly refused the request from refugee organisations to keep temporary reception centres "mothballed" — as the Germans do — in case of such a crisis. It is four weeks into the war, but the two Leeds buildings now in use were found only on Friday. That does not suggest a commitment to compassion.

And what about the long term? Refugee organisations say that even though nearly all arrivals want to go home, it is necessary to behave as if they will not. After weeks in centres they need homes in the community, in "clusters" of families within easy reach of one another. Children must be found schools and adults taught English. "If they do go back, brilliant, that's a start in a foreign language. But they must not live in limbo," said a Refugee Council spokeswoman. Of the 2,500 Bosnian refugees to Britain, she continued, almost all expressed a wish to go home, and the Government spoke of "a couple of months". So far only 200 have returned. Their homes no longer exist.

This is the reality of the situation, and it is one that Nato nations must accept with grace, reflecting per- population must be kept physically close to its home is 50 years out of date. It is not as if they had to migrate by ocean liner: this is not the Highland Clearances or the Spanish Civil War. These people have already done the hard bit of the journey, trudging across the mountains. Three hours in an aeroplane seat would get them anywhere in Europe, and back again just as easily when (if) it is all over. A few more hours and they could be fed and comforted in Ohio or New England. If we can move bombs around to suit our "humanitarian" ideals, then we can damn well move some people around, too. The Macedonian Government begged us to weeks ago, as it tottered under the impact of an influx equivalent to one sixth of its population. "Don't send blankets," said its spokesman. "Send empty planes. Please. Fly them to Britain or America." It

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Libby Purves

'It is Scotland that binds the whole Union together. If Scotland becomes independent, it should take Ulster with it'

Patrick West

The elections in Scotland are feared by many to signal the beginning of the end of the Union, ushering in a new, unhappy political age: Balkanised Britain. Yet the dissolution of Britain will not be as bad as people think. It will be worse, because of one factor alarmingly absent from the current debate: the future of Ulster.

The reason is stunningly obvious. For without a Union, one cannot be a Unionist: if the concept of Britishness has been abolished, one cannot be British. A loyalist? Loyal to whom? The end of the Union will leave a million people in Ulster bereft not only of a state, but of a nation; propelled into a kind of ethnic vacuum, a psychological no man's land.

So if Scotland does become independent, what will be done with Northern Ireland? There are four options.

A united Ireland would not be acceptable to Ulster Unionists and Dublin certainly would not relish the prospect of having to deal with a million volatile and unwilling new citizens of an enlarged Republic.

Alternatively, Northern Ireland might want to seek outright independence, an option mooted by William Craig's Vanguard movement in the 1970s. This has since gained little favour; shunned by a people whose attachment is to the Queen and everything British, not to a parochial Ulster statelet devoid of military protection from London.

Then again, Ulster could remain in a rump United Kingdom of England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Such a preposterous political set-up would fail. It would founder on the rock of Ulster attitudes towards the English. It is participation in a

greater Britain, not an attenuated linkage with a little England which sustains Unionists. Ulster folk, Protestant and Catholic, regarding the English as ignorant, capricious and reluctant upholders of the Union. The English certainly have no understanding of Unionists, whom they caricature as violent, perverse, bowler-hatted interpreters of Britishness.

Ulster's affiliation to the UK rests upon Scotland's participation. Ulster's most Unionist party, Ian Paisley's DUP, begins its conference not with *Land of Hope and Glory* but *Scotland the Brave*. Indeed, it is Scotland that binds the whole Union together. Which is why a radical option should be mooted: if Scotland becomes independent, it should take Ulster with it.

For Ulster Protestants, "the mainland" — literally and psychologically — begins at Stranraer. Six out of seven Ulster Protestants claim to be the descendants of Scottish settlers of the 17th century. Indeed, anyone who has walked down Belfast's Shankill Road will have observed the Cross of St George noticeably absent on murals: the Cross of St Andrew dominates. The UVF and the UDA are said to raise around £100,000 a year in Scotland, while the Orange Order is formidable in Caledonia, boasting 1,000 lodges and a reputed 80,000 members. And if soccer be the litmus test of national identity today, it is interesting to note the prevalence of two particular football kits on the streets of Glasgow. Glasgow Rangers and Glasgow Celtic are

the Province's two biggest soccer teams. Most revealing of all, during last year's World Cup, most people in Ulster — both Catholic and Protestant — cheered on the Scots rather than the English team.

Yet the most compelling reason why Scotland should take Ulster with it stems from the increasingly accepted notion — popularised by *Braveheart* and Irvine Welsh's *Trainspotting* — that Scotland was "colonised" by the English and therefore should seek national liberation.

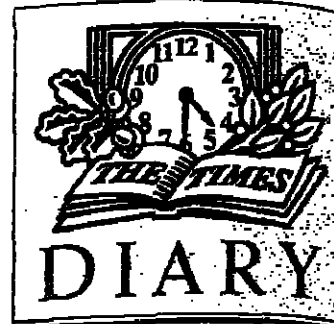
This is a convenient fiction. Scotland prior to the Union of 1707 was a backward and impoverished land, eager to join England's prosperous empire-building project.

Self-serving Scottish talk of English colonisation actually masks a more authentic form of subjugation that occurred 300 years ago, when Ulster was

overrun by thousands of Scottish settlers. Their sons still pay tribute to their ancestors, and their lost language of "Ulster-Scots". England never colonised Scotland. But Scotland did make a colony out of Ulster. So Scotland, when you go, take Ulster with you.

There may not be much chance of seeing an Ulster-Scots union, as there was in the 6th century when Dál Riata ruled a single kingdom that straddled the North Channel. Such a modest proposal would be derided as brushily simplistic. But brushy simplicities are what you end up dealing in once you resort to the discourse of "colonialism". The simple truth is that if the Union does collapse, in the name of "national liberation" then Ulster faces a future more brutish than any colonisation.

patrickwest@newsint.co.uk



Retail therapy

HAVING settled the future of the world's children with Hillary Clinton at the Nato jamboree, Cherie Blair got down to what is really important: shopping.

Our "First Lady" ventured to the fashionable Polo Ralph Lauren clothes emporium in George Town, Washington, on Saturday. With bodyguards (but minus Gaynor Cook), she whisked around, then loaded booty into three waiting cars. The FO is surprised. "There was a full programme for leaders and their wives. There was little free time." Well done, Cherie (pictured with her new mate, Ralph): she has crossed the final frontier for new Labour — polo.



"NOT" giving a sod" might be George Walden's take on Ken Clarke. But Paddy Ashdown has different memories. He shuffled in with Clarke to hear the Queen's Speech after the election. "The Tories would be mad not to elect you leader, Ken," said Paddy supportively. Shot back Ken: "Yes, but they are mad."

A BISHOP who branded opponents of women priests "miserable buggers" has really gone for it this time: the Bishop of Edinburgh is to publish a book with such challenging questions as "Was the Trojan horse gay?" In *Godless Morality*, the Right Rev Richard Holloway argues that God is no longer necessary for moral guidance and that sin is an outmoded notion. "He's just trying to shock," thunders George Austin, Archdeacon of York. "Take sin away and there is no point in him being a bishop. He's just a loose cannon."

SHOE fetishist Carla Powell is to offer her stilettos to the V&A, which is interested in mounting an exhibition of female power nudes: "People have houses crawling with books. I have shoes."

SELF-CONFIDENT children are invited to submit designs for the Diana, Princess of Wales memorial playground. The Royal Parks Agency seeks "expressions of interest" for its "innovative play environment" in Kensington. It hopes to "cater for a wide range of play types, eg. symbolic, socio-dramatic, social, creative, exploratory, fantasy, locomotor, mastery, object, role..." I could go on.

A YEAR 2000 bounty for wage slaves: the millennium bug has hit the Inland Revenue, with tax demands going out for 1900.



THE assassin blamed for putting down *One Man and His Dog* is said to be training her sights on *Late Review*, the arts kernel which houses Elaine Greer, Tony Parsons and my friend Mark Lawson. Timid sorts fear that Jane Root, the new Controller of BBC2, is about to end their misery.

"We think she sees us as old hat," I am told. "We have heard that she might call us for her 'fresh image'."

SAD sight: Peter Mandelson, minus ministerial car, pooling along in a tiny blue Fiat Punto.

BEST wishes to Henry "Blower" Blotfeld, who has been confined to a hospital ward after a triple bypass heart op. The 59-year-old cricket commentator, celebrating 25 years since he started at *Test Match Special* on the BBC, should be back in the box by the beginning of June for the Super Six.

My old chum Antony Worrall Thompson is off the hook in the great shrew invasion saga. He points out that he parted company with *Simpsons*, the proprietor of *Dell'Ugo*, more than two years ago. My butler Owen promises to step up his inquiries.

JASPER GERARD

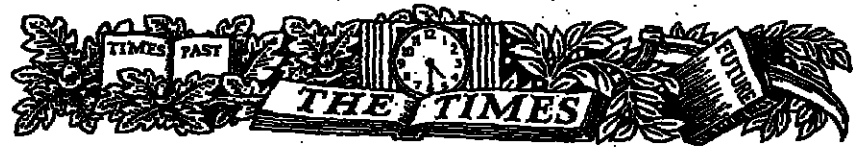
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TROUBLED WATERS

The wrong symbolic gesture from Nato and the EU

Nato's leaders left Washington more united as to aims, but still adrift as to means. Despite the best efforts of Tony Blair and Jacques Chirac, Bill Clinton continues to dither over the one decision that would impress Slobodan Milosevic and his generals, an order to mobilise Nato ground forces. The instruction to Nato commanders to revise their "assessment" of the options for ground troops sounds like, and is, disguised prevarication.

Whatever the impact of the intensified air campaign on which the Alliance is agreed, this delay makes no military sense. Even under the best scenario, withdrawal by Belgrade of "all" its forces from Kosovo, Nato will need a much larger and better-armed force than it now has ready to go, because it can take nothing on trust. If Belgrade does not yield, Nato will have to push it out of Kosovo, and that demands deployment well before Kosovo's early autumn snows come to the Serbs' defence. Instead of drawing satisfaction from yesterday's apparently "brave" testing of the Serb political waters by Vuk Draskovic, the Yugoslav Deputy Prime Minister, therefore, the alert should be sounding in Nato headquarters. Nato is at risk of being caught humiliatingly unprepared, as Mr Milosevic will not have failed to note.

To this sin of omission, Nato leaders added one of commission — the utterly ill-judged proclamation of a naval blockade to prevent oil flowing into Serbia via the Montenegrin port of Bar on the Adriatic. Nothing Nato has done since March 24 throws more doubt on the quality of its strategic thinking. The EU and Nato oil embargo on both Serbia and Montenegro is itself a mistake; the most likely consequence will be to deliver Montenegro's democratic and bravely neutral Government into Belgrade's power. A naval blockade is unthinkable. It would be illegal under international law; its impact on the Serbian people of Kosovo would be marginal; and its political consequences would be little short of disastrous.

To stop a ship on the high seas is an act of war. That would be the legal implication of stopping, say, a Russian vessel. And Nato is pointing its guns at a phantom target.

There have been dark references to Russian oil shipments to Serbia. But Russia has shipped nothing through land pipelines since the start of the Nato bombing campaign, and only insignificant amounts by sea. By far the largest quantities, including 65,000 barrels in a single Texaco shipment from British refineries, have been of EU and Nato origin. The folly of this move is that the Russian Government will now come under domestic pressure to put Nato to the test.

The US is wrong to claim that a blockade is justified by UN Security Council Resolution 1160 of 1998, which bans exports to Yugoslavia of "arms and related materiel of all types". The UN's oil-related sanctions were specifically lifted in 1995, following the Dayton accords. Wiser than its political masters, Nato's military committee yesterday conceded as much, announcing that its "visit and search" regime would not involve the use of force to stop non-Nato or EU vessels. But Nato still intends to challenge "third nation" vessels, to judge by its claim that their shippers will stay away because "no one likes to be stopped at sea by a warship".

Before real damage ensues, this loose talk must stop. Nato and the EU must also exempt Montenegro from their ban. The oil embargo is, as its Government claims, "a real catastrophe" for this already war-damaged economy flooded with Kosovar refugees; it could destroy President Djukanovic and drag Montenegro into the war. His case for neutrality crucially depends, in a country where loyalties are divided, on keeping daily life as normal as possible. Of course there is a risk that some oil will reach the Yugoslav military, which gleefully used the excuse of Nato's blockade yesterday to order Montenegro to hand over its slender oil reserves. But set against Nato's claim to have destroyed 70 per cent of Yugoslav stocks as well as its two refineries, that seepage would be minimal. Other porous frontiers mean that Nato cannot squeeze every last drop of oil out of Serbia's supply lines. It should get back to concentrating on the central question: when, how and with what troops it is to prosecute the endgame against Belgrade.

FATE WORSE THAN DEBT

Simplistic gestures will not help developing nations

Where there is a pinnacle there is also a precipice. So, as expectations for a new millennium mount, it is unsurprising that a sense of disquiet should also stir. What excited gesture can the West make to mark this moment? How can optimism be maintained at a time when anticlimax looms? The millennium mood creates a market for the grand proposal, for the great achievement to which a nation can point for reassurance. At this turning-point of time, people are particularly susceptible to the simplistic scheme, to the madcap proposal which captivates public enthusiasm. The campaign propagated by the faith-based Jubilee 2000 movement to eradicate Third World debt may be well-intentioned, but it amounts to just such a senselessly impulsive gesture.

This is not to imply that the issue of debt relief can be dismissed as the dream of idealists. Quite rightly, a privileged West feels uneasy about the poverty trap in which it watches underdeveloped nations flail, helplessly trapped by histories of financial mismanagement and irresponsible handouts. This week, as representatives from the G7 economic powers — including the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, and the International Development Secretary Clare Short — gather in Washington, debt relief is deservedly occupying a prominent place in discussions.

But, as Ms Short noted in a welcome and tough-minded speech, the problems of the world's poorest countries cannot be solved by blanket cancellation of debt. Although initially such freedom would result in financial improvement, without accompanying development of sound economic policies it could only ever provide a

tantalisingly short-term sense of progress. Debt, after all, as any businessman knows, is not necessarily bad. Governments, like companies, must borrow to invest and expand economically. Unless a country can prove itself capable of paying competitive rates of interest on a loan, it is unlikely ever to find a willing creditor again.

Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) must continue to qualify, as they do now, for debt relief schemes. In acknowledgement of their efforts at reform, Uganda and Bolivia have had their financial burden eased. It would be poor reward for such nations should countries such as Sudan or the Democratic Republic of Congo be equally helped. Sudan may be among the world's most impoverished nations, yet its Government still chooses to spend most of its scant budget on arms. Congo is destroying itself in corruption and conflict. To forgive its debts at present would only result in yet more military spending and fatter overseas bank accounts in the names of a powerful minority.

The developing world demands measured wisdom from the West, not the grandiose gesture. It deserves respect, not patronising indulgence. Mr Brown has already outlined a plan to improve the situation of debt-burdened nations, including an increase in aid and the selling of International Monetary Fund gold to help to finance debt cuts. In answer to frequent accusations of irresponsible lending, he has committed Britain for two years to a policy whereby export credits will not be extended to HIPC for non-productive expenditure. These solutions take time. The developing world's problems will take more than the stroke of a clock to solve.

LIFE IS A CABERNET

A little of what you fancy can do you good

Alcohol is apparently becoming the unexpected and fashionable health drink. While all brands of fresh orange juice and mineral water appear to have more or less the same sort of positive impact on health, regardless of which oranges have been squeezed, and from which well the water has sprung. The nutritional benefits of alcohol, in particular red wine, are the subject of a more advanced science. Red wine drinkers, well known as extremely sophisticated analysts, can now compare the invigorating qualities of specific grapes grown in different areas.

The news today that a French cardiologist claims that cabernet sauvignon from the Gironde is one of the most effective wines at keeping arteries clear is another example of the growing recognition that, in moderation, alcohol can be good for you.

A few weeks ago, Safeway, with the help of the University of Glasgow, revealed that its Chilean cabernet sauvignon (Lontue region) and merlot may also help you live longer. The secret ingredient in this case is flavonols, and the more of them the better. Flavonols are anti-oxidants which may keep heart disease and cancer at bay. The

University and the supermarket now have the flavonol ratings of no fewer than 65 red wines. So, flavonols may be about to be the next big thing for healthy enophiles.

Californians have gone a step further. Labels on some wine bottles encourage drinkers "to consult your family doctor about the health effects of wine consumption". Given the constraints of the NHS, it is unlikely that British GPs will find time to fully swot up on the flavonol and resveratrol ratings of the local off-licence's offerings.

Some sceptics might seek to dismiss these nutritional revelations as a marketing ploy by wine-producers and supermarkets. Or they might point out, correctly, that large quantities of alcohol are distinctly disturbing. But the recognition that wine can be good for you should be welcomed as a small corrective against the numerous health scares which overshadow the good things in life. Alcohol has spent years out in the cold as a condemned drink. It is now time to acknowledge that whisky can have anti-coagulant qualities, that white wine can guard against shellfish bacteria, and that a glass or two of cabernet a day may be just what the doctor orders.

حكمة من الامم

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Tory commitment to public services

From Dr David Green

Sir, William Hague's attempt to earn the trust of the people in health and education ("The NHS is safer in our hands", April 23) is deeply confused. Free marketeers accept that the State should guarantee universal access to health and education; but they also point out that maintaining access for rich and poor does not require the Government to own and manage all the schools and hospitals.

In healthcare the consequence of putting a national cash limit on spending appears to have been the delay, dilution and denial of care, exemplified by the premature death of thousands of cancer sufferers, reported in the same issue of *The Times*.

In the heyday of Thatcherism the favourite remedy of free marketeers for state monopoly in education was the voucher, a system of finance that guaranteed all children the chance to go to a school chosen by their parents. In America vouchers are a reality. Publicly funded schemes have been established in Wisconsin and Ohio, with others planned, and privately funded voucher schemes are available in some 40 states.

New Labour has even made a small gesture in favour of competition and diversity by encouraging private management of some schools. Yet, just as the case for competition is gaining wider acceptance, Mr Hague seems to have decided to be more left-wing than Labour.

Yours sincerely,
DAVID GREEN
(Director, Health and Welfare Unit).
The Institute of Economic Affairs,
2 Lord North Street, SW1P 3LB,
April 26.

From Mr M. R. W. G. Banks

Sir, Well done, Peter Lilley, in helping to guide the Conservative Party towards renewing public confidence in our commitment to public services such as education, health and welfare. These issues, together with sound monetary policy and good defence, are the bedrock of Conservative beliefs.

William Hague is right. The battles of the 1980s have been won. We must now look to the challenges of the 21st century.

Up to 1992 I campaigned in my constituency on a personal commitment to improve public services and the local environment within the lifetime of a Parliament. The prospect of winning back more such seats is considerably aided by William Hague's commitment to fight against the euro, as well as reaffirming the Conservative commitment to public services.

Yours faithfully,
MATTHEW BANKS
(Conservative MP for Southport, 1992-97),
Gordon Castle, Fochabers,
Morayshire IV32 7PQ,
April 25.

From Mrs Christine Butler

Sir, As a lifelong Conservative supporter and former candidate, I am very distressed that I can no longer support the Conservative Party after Peter Lilley's meanly-mouthed betrayal. Surely a massive increase in public spending and taxes will alienate what few remaining supporters there are.

Yours faithfully,
CHRISTINE BUTLER,
51 Cavendish Avenue,
Cambridge CB1 7UR,
April 26.

From Mr Tim Huth

Sir, I was pleased to learn that the Conservatives may shortly return to One Nation "Heartbeat" policies. If so, I could be tempted back to that party after a 20-year sojourn with the SDP and Liberal Democrats.

Congratulations Peter Lilley. Like Clause Four, needs must prevail.
Yours faithfully,
TIM HUTH,
22 Bracklesham Road,
Hayling Island PO15 9SJ,
timhuth@clara.net
April 25.

High romance

From Mr Richard Green

Sir, It was my intention to propose on a high peak (letters, April 16, 17 and 23) to the Australian woman who is now my wife, during the three-week visit to the UK of her sprightly father in 1988.

I lost my nerve the first weekend atop Snowdon and was thwarted by adverse weather the following weekend at Ben Nevis.

Weather and nerve were overcome on the final weekend of his visit when I handed him the camera and asked him to take a photo of Kym and me at the top of Scafell Pike on St George's Day. I shouted "Now!", popped the question and the rest, as they say, is history.

Yours faithfully,
RICHARD GREEN,
19 Eyebrook Road,
Bowdon, Cheshire WA14 3LH,
101572.3107@compuserve.com
April 23.

Letters to the Editor should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number — 0171-782 5046.
e-mail to: letters@the-times.co.uk

Nato strategy and stamina to succeed in Balkans

From Lieutenant-Colonel John Woodhouse (ret'd)

Sir, Nato targeted and hit the Serb TV station in Belgrade knowing it was on air and staffed by civilians. The deaths that resulted are surely not collateral damage but murder.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN WOODHOUSE,
Higher Melcombe,
Melcombe Bingham,
Dorchester, Dorset DT2 7PB,
April 26.

From Mr S. Harry

Sir, I read with increasing disquiet the reports of what Nato considers a military target. The Geneva Conventions Act 1957 (amended 1995) of the UK specifically states that "civilians shall not be the object of attack" (sch 5, art 52.1) and also that "civilians shall enjoy protection unless they take a direct part in hostilities" (sch 6, art 13.3). The definition of a civilian can be simplified to persons not involved with either military or paramilitary groups. The targeting of a television broadcasting station, although arguably furthering Nato's objectives, was an intentional and premeditated attack on civilians.

I submit that this attack has breached the terms of the Geneva Conventions and puts the Nato forces on the same moral ground as the Serbian leadership they are fighting against.

Yours faithfully,
SAM HARRY,
106 Worting Road,
Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 8UB,
j.harry@btinternet.com
April 25.

From Professor Geoffrey Lee Williams

Sir, There has been an excess of gloomy talk in the media about Nato having suffered a strategic defeat over Kosovo, to some extent mirrored in the feeble articles written by Simon Jenkins and the defeatist prose of William Rees-Mogg "Keep out and stay out", April 19.

Why this urge to pass premature judgment on a complex military operation whose outcome has yet to be determined by events still unfolding? Is it driven by the strategic analysis of the likely outcome of the current conflict or by a palpable desire to appease

Smack of authority

From Mrs Cornelia Oddie

Sir, In his letter (April 19) Roger Singleton of Barnardo's claims that according to a recent MORI poll 73 per cent of those asked supported law reform to protect children from physical assault, but did not wish parents to be criminalised for giving "trivial smacks".

Children are already protected by law from violent abuse by parents and others. Further legislation being campaigned for by the "Children are unbeatable" alliance is intended to stop all physical punishment of children by law and will thus criminalise good, non-violent parents who judge that a smack (or threatened smack) on the hand, leg or bottom may be appropriate corrective punishment for specified misdemeanours.

Such proposed legislation not only diminishes the right of parents to judge how best to raise their children: more seriously still, it opens the way for state intervention into properly functioning families with the possible result that large numbers of children could be unjustly removed from their parents. The same reasonable-sounding arguments were used in Sweden, where there is no distinction in law between smacking and violent abuse, and parents may be imprisoned for a simple smack. The stated aim of Barnardo's in its booklet *Why speak out*

Community violence

From Mr John R. Parsons

Sir, In your issue of April 22, the first five pages are taken up predominantly with the story of two teenage boys shooting to death their fellow students in Colorado.

Subsequent coverage in the British media has been substantially concerned with a perceived malaise within American culture, with an emphasis on the perennial British obsession with guns.

On page 15 of the same issue appears the headline "Gang tortured mentally ill girl to death". This story concerns five young people who, allegedly, over a period of six days

Nut allergy

From Dr Julian P. W. Walter

Sir, Hopefully now, everyone who suffers from a serious nut allergy (report, April 21) will be supplied with, and accept their need to carry, adrenaline (intramuscular) injector pens for immediate use. Or preferably two, one for the handbag or pocket and one for the home or car. Cost to the NHS — approximately £25 each, for what is the lifesaving treatment of choice for acute anaphylaxis.

Yours faithfully,
J. P. W. WALTER,
Rapha House Surgery,
Stockcroft Road, Balcombe,
West Sussex RH17 6LQ.

Belgrade in the hope that Nato could agree to a Munich-style settlement with the mendacious Milosevic?

Surely the suspicion must be that the growing number of strategists have taken the easy way out in not having the stamina to stick with the brutal logic of applying graduated coercion on an adversary whose behaviour defies the standards and values by which Nato stands? Clearly, Nato has not yet suffered a strategic defeat and has at its disposal sufficient military means to prevent such a disastrous outcome.

Let us not heed the appeasers of Paris and Rome and refuse to listen to the lamentable intellectual heirs of Munich whose defeatism your elegantly expressed editorials have done so much to discredit.

Yours sincerely,
GEOFFREY LEE WILLIAMS,
The Institute of Economic and Political Studies,
Insep Cambridge,
Warkworth House,
Warkworth Terrace,
Cambridge CB1 1EE,
April 26.

From Mr Gay W. K. Fenn-Smith

Sir, Serving on the staff of 3rd Infantry Division during the Suez Operation Musketeer, I saw many of the order, counter-order and disorder aspects of an "illegal war" and recognise many similarities between 1956 and 1999.

Your obituary today of Dame Kathleen Raven reminded us that 7,000 Londoners perished in one night during the Blitz. Churchill would probably have been lynched if he had suggested suing for peace in the aftermath of that dreadful experience.

As the aerial reduction of Serbia intensifies it seems more likely to me that our Prime Minister will be bracketed with Eden in the history books than that the Serbs will allow Milosevic to surrender.

Yours faithfully,
GAY W. K. FENN-SMITH,
153 Cambridge Street, SW1V 4QB,
April 21.

From Mr Derek B. Forrest

Sir, Our youngest son is a gunner in a Challenger with The King's Royal Hussars sitting in a wood on the Macedonian border (Glastonbury without the music, he calls it).

against smacking? would appear to be to equate them in this country.

Physical violence towards children is already illegal. Further legislation is aimed to outlaw trivial smacks and the MORI poll results show that most respondents are against this.

Yours faithfully,
CORNELIA ODDIE
(Deputy Director),
Family Education Trust,
322 Woodstock Road,
Oxford OX2 7NS,
April 19.

From Mr Michael Cavaghan-Pack

Sir, Like the Chief Executive of Barnardo's I, too, support "positive discipline for children", but have sufficient respect for my children not to waste my time giving them "trivial smacks". I would certainly support law reform to protect children, but if that means criminalising effective smacking or spanking, then my support, and I am sure that of many parents, seriously weakens.

To equate a soundly smacked child with a physical assault is gravely to trivialise child cruelty, and can only impede rather than advance the present campaign.

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL CAVAGHAN-PACK,
The Manor House,
Thurloxton, Taunton TA2 8RH,
April 19.

tortured a teenage girl (with whom they were acquainted) to death. Not in America, or some faraway place with a strange-sounding name, but in England. To my knowledge the British media have not questioned or debated the implications of this behaviour.

I find it worrying and symptomatic that the British media see fit to invest so much effort into highlighting the problems of the United States rather than the equally disturbing problems in our own country.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN PARSONS,
6 Little Hayes,
Kington, Devon TQ12 3YP,
johnparsons@btinternet.com
April 24.

Fit to read?

From Miss Susan Pease

Sir, There appears to have been a bad infestation by an elusive creature that eats newspaper, the evidence being a number of small, rectangular holes throughout *The Times*.

Would it not be a good idea to put all the useful offers for books, cassettes, CDs, etc. on one page? We then might be able to trap and identify this animal.

Yours faithfully,
SUSAN PEASE,
130 Goldhurst Terrace, NW6 3HR,
susan_pease_designs_ltd@compuserve.com
April 26.

He and his family have to accept that at times he will have to put his life at risk. We do, however, owe it to him to give him the best possible chance, not only of winning but also of staying alive. I am concerned that the reluctance of Nato politicians to commit themselves to what I regard as an inevitable land offensive is not doing this.

Even if we begin now it will be three to four months before sufficient forces and logistics can be assembled to ensure success. This brings us up to August and every day's delay brings us nearer to autumn with its poor visibility and short days.

My plea therefore is for the politicians to abandon the present "no land forces" mantra and get on with it. Unless, of course, the plan is to wait for next spring.

Yours faithfully,
DEREK FORREST,
Egremont, Wigan Road,
Leyland, Lancashire PR5 2SD,
April 23.

From His Honour David Pennant

Sir, It appears that we are not officially at war with Yugoslavia. It seems, too, that Mr Blair is saying that the bombing campaign will, regrettably but inevitably, cause civilian casualties. If somebody makes a formal charge of murder against the person who ordered the dropping of the bombs, what legal defence, if any, could be urged on his behalf?

Yours faithfully,
DAVID PENNANT,
12 Etnick Road,
Branksome Park, Poole BH13 6LG,
April 26.

From Mr Peter Tatton-Brown

Sir, Now is the time for Nato to be positive and produce an "Albright Plan" to help Montenegro, Macedonia and Albania out of their poverty by helping them to build schools, hospitals and roads and providing training.

Such action might help the Serbs accept a peaceful and honourable solution to their problems.

Yours faithfully,
PETER TATTON-BROWN,
Old Watercombe Farm,
Branscombe, Seaton,
East Devon EX12 3BT,
April 26.

Millennium denial

From Mr Gerry Hanson

Sir, Having reached the age where I no longer feel confident about buying green bananas, it would be arrogant to assume that I'll still be around to celebrate the millennium on the correct date in 20 months' time.

However, the celebrations of the misguided majority promise to provide a splendid party, too good to miss. So, when we have recovered from our hangovers, sensible people like Mr Michael Shaw (letter, April 22; see also letter, April 16), should simply greet their foolish friends with a "welcome to the last year of the 20th century".

Yours truly,
GERRY HANSON,
Potters Lodge, 74a Slough Road,
Iver Heath SL0 0DY,
April 22.

From Mr Ed Robinson

Sir, How are we to greet those who will not be celebrating the millennium on January 1 next? As it is likely that the following day will be little different from the one that preceded it, I suggest "Good morning".

Yours faithfully,
ED ROBINSON,
7 High Warden, Hexham,
Northumberland NE46 4SR.

Classical mix-up

From the Judge Advocate General

Sir, Joe Joseph ("Right and wrong", April 23) enjoins everyone to speed lawyers on their way into a Latin-free world with the reminder that Lord Hailsham of St Marylebone described his muntered Woolpack comments as *sotto voce*. Thus, writes Mr Joseph with a triumphant chortle, "Hailsham instinctively used the Latin phrase".

At least some of us now Latinless lawyers can tell Latin from Italian. Is it time to wrest journalists, too, away from foreign jargon?

Yours faithfully,
JAMES W. RANT,
Office of the Judge Advocate General,
22 Kingsway, WC2B 6LE,
April 23.

Beyond belief?

From Mr Colin Jones

Sir, You report (April 17) that God is said to have given worshippers' teeth gold fillings, and also that a businessman filmed his friends "having sex without their knowledge".

Are you implying that there is a connection between these two miracles?

Yours faithfully,
COLIN JONES,
Three Gables, Combs, High Peak,
Derbyshire SK23 9UU,
April 17.

OBITUARIES

Jill Dando, television presenter, died in Charing Cross Hospital, London, yesterday aged 37, after sustaining fatal injuries outside her home in Fulham. She was born on November 9, 1961.

ALTHOUGH she always claimed to be mystified by the effect she had on the opposite sex — her nickname for herself was "Blando" — Jill Dando in understated two-piece suits probably made more male hearts pound than many a television blonde of more lurid assets. It was the air of efficiency she brought to what she did — the efficiency of a ward sister or WPC — that set pulses racing as well as securing her the respect of her peers in broadcasting.

Jealous female newspaper columnists might be envious about her neat appearance, but it was the message as much as the medium that gave her undeniable strengths as a broadcaster. Such programmes as *Crimewatch*, on which she worked in harness with Nick Ross, require the ability to co-ordinate and present a vast amount of information in intelligible form, in an exciting studio atmosphere which is being continually bombarded with new data. And in an

age when so many young women presenters aim to skate by on a diet of barely-literate burbling, "wows" and giggles, Dando brought to her job a lucidity which had, as in so many of the best television presenters, been learnt in print journalism.

Indeed, there were many who felt that, in advertising her latest job, presenting BBC Television's *Antiques Inspector*, by adopting the leather-clad look of a James Bond girl for the cover of *Radio Times*, she was selling herself short. Wholesomeness was, after all, no crime and Ms Dando had no need to be trying to follow in the starchy footsteps of a Honor Blackman.

Jill Dando was born in Weston-super-Mare, with a hole in the heart which was not discovered until she was 18 months old. An operation at Bristol Royal Infirmary corrected the condition and she was able to lead a normal life.

In Weston she attended Worle Comprehensive School and then Broadoak Sixth Form Centre where she became head girl. She left school to study journalism at South Glamorgan Institute of Higher Education, returning to her home town for her first job, on the

Weston and Somerset Mercury which she joined in 1980.

There, she cut her teeth on the diet of council meetings, funerals and flower shows which is the lot of the local reporter, learning in the process the homely but necessary virtues of speed and accuracy.

In 1985 she moved to BBC Radio Devon where she presented the daily breakfast news programme and after a year there she was on the move again to BBC Television, South West, to present an evening regional magazine programme.

This gave a much wider field for her talents and in 1988 she moved to London to present BBC TV's *Breakfast News*. From that moment on she was a household name throughout Britain, her blonde good looks earning her the sobriquet "Golden Girl of Television".

Professionally she became known as one of a not-so-large clutch of television presenters who are equal at home fronting news, light entertainment and travel programmes. She had soon added the *Six O'Clock News* in which she was a stand-in newscaster, *Crimewatch* and *Holiday* to her portfolio of broadcasting activities.

Holiday, with its unparalleled travel opportunities, was at the

furthest remove imaginable from the local paper she had started on. But she was always to say that it was the more gruelling *Crimewatch* which was her favourite.

When she had first been invited on to the programme, she had been cautious about becoming a television policewoman, and quizzed its first presenters, Nick Ross and Sue Cook, as to whether either of them had ever been threatened. She was later to say, possibly prophetically: "I was aware that standing up in public doing this job could mean I was putting myself in the firing line. Most people on the programme would rather not be, so you might be seen as a threat." She was indeed the object of some unwelcome attentions.

Dando was involved, among many others, with *Crimewatch* programmes which shed light on the 1996 murders of Lin and Megan Russell and generated the telephone calls which led to the identification of Michael Stone, who was later jailed for life. Her own fortitude on camera was put to its stiffest test when she interviewed Danielle Cable, the 17-year-old fiancée of Steve Cameron, who was stabbed to death in a "road rage" attack on him on an M25 sliproad.

"At the end we both went off the set and burst into tears," she later confessed.

In the meantime, the label "Golden Girl of Television" could, as she was soon to find, be as much of a liability as an asset. When, last autumn, it was rumoured that the BBC's *Six O'Clock News* was to be relaunched with her fronting it, there was a swift riposte, with veteran newscasters leaping to be known that bloneness rather than gravitas and experience appeared to be the Corporation's criterion in its thinking about the appointment.

The BBC dithered for several weeks. Eventually, angered about a handling of the matter which appeared to cast aspersions on her mental equipment, Dando declared that she would not be considered as a candidate in the circumstances. When the dust settled she found herself in a better position than before, with renewed contracts for *Crimewatch* and further travel series, as well as her latest show *Antiques Investigator*.

She was thought to be wanting to scale down her television activities since her recent engagement to a gynaecologist, Alan Farthing. They were to have been married in the autumn.



Jill Dando: at home presenting a wide range of programmes

RONALD ALLEY

Ronald Alley, Keeper of the Modern Collection at the Tate Gallery, 1965-86, died on April 25 aged 73. He was born on March 12, 1926.

Ronald Alley spent 35 years at the Tate Gallery, becoming the first Keeper of its Modern Collection in 1965. When he arrived at the gallery, its holdings of modern art were still based firmly on the French Impressionist paintings acquired in the 1920s through the Courtaulds. By the time he retired in 1986, he had not only immeasurably transformed the collections, helping in the process to turn the Tate into an important international museum of modern art, but had given an effective lead in introducing the 20th century to other art collections all over Britain. His achievements were recognised in a valedictory exhibition at the Tate in 1986, *Forty Years of Modern Art*.

Educated at Bristol Grammar School, Ronald Edgar Alley was the son of a solicitor's clerk. During the Second World War he was a Bevin Boy. But he was also a born scholar, whose decision not to pursue a career in ornithology but instead to follow art was influenced by Professor Rudolf Wittkower of the Courtauld Institute, the father of his closest friend, and by the



Ronald Alley at the time of the exhibition marking his retirement from the Tate in 1986, with a work by Roy Lichtenstein

Picasso-Matisse exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum after the war.

He never lost his love of birds, and nor, happily, did he acquire an over-developed sense of his own dignity, and late at night after dinner he

could occasionally be persuaded to give his hilarious rendition of the call of the baby coot.

He studied at the Courtauld Institute of Art, and in 1951 joined the Tate staff as an assistant keeper. He became a deputy keeper three years

later, and Keeper of the Modern Collection in 1965.

At that time there was no division between the British and modern collections, and the 20th century was barely represented at all. Alley was determined to make changes.

There weren't any realist or Surrealist works, or abstracts," he later recalled. "It was partly because the gallery had been starved and partly because most of our predecessors didn't like modern art."

He set about collecting temporary work and filling gaps in holdings of the 20th-century avant garde, from the Fauves through informal abstraction to Minimalism. In 1958 he saw an exhibition of paintings by Jackson Pollock and was immediately struck by their vivacity and originality. He went to New York for the first time in 1960 and found a complete range of new work, returning not only very excited by it, but both sad and angry at the thought of "how stupid people had been in this country in missing the opportunity" to acquire some of the new art for public collections.

He wrote to all the public galleries in Britain in an attempt to compile a list of the national collection of 20th-century art, and was horrified by what he discovered. "There were only three Picassos, not one later than 1903, all small, and only about two Surrealist paintings in the whole lot put together."

He wrote an article in the *Museum Journal* — the Tate would not allow him to write it in a national newspaper for fear of offending other galleries — castigating in unmitigated words the absence from public collections of "a single painting or sculpture that occupies a key position in the development of 20th-century art".

Along with such critics and curators as Roland Penrose and Herbert Read, and with the support of successive Tate directors Norman Reid and Alan Bowness, Alley was a key figure in countering the persistent British apathy to modern art. He found himself involved in some notable controversies, such as that surrounding Carl Andre's notorious "bricks". He was greatly gratified that the collection he began is now to be given its own museum, the Bankside Tate.

Alley wrote prodigiously, but his monument will be the two volumes of the Tate's catalogue of foreign modern art. He recounted that "on my second day after joining the Tate I was called into the office of Mr Le Roux Smith Le Roux, the deputy keeper". There he was "shown a very rudimentary typescript which was to become a catalogue," and asked if he would be good enough to take it away and look to see if there was anything to add. "I worked on it day and night for about ten years after that," he recalled.

He was particularly a champion of British contemporary work, of Graham Sutherland and of the St Ives artists. He was friendly with Barbara Hepworth, Ben Nicholson, and particularly Patrick Heron, and collected the paintings of William Scott.

He was responsible for the major retrospective of Hepworth's work in 1968, and, with Sir John Rothenstein, wrote the *catalogue raisonné* for Francis Bacon as long ago as 1964. Before his last illness he was able to complete work on the current exhibition of 50 years of British art for the Cecil Higgins Gallery, Bedford, which runs until July.

Although Rothenstein was a mentor and the Tate director under whom he rose rapidly, Alley never quite forgave him for failing to buy Matisse's early *The Red Studio* when it was offered to the Tate for less than £1,000. It would have been a fundamental key to the collection, and it was a mistake Alley himself was never able to remedy, though he did manage to acquire Matisse's *The Snail*. At the end of his career he believed that it was only in Matisse that the collection was still seriously wanting.

He was married to the painter and sculptor Anthea Oswell, who died in 1993. Although they divorced in 1973, she retained a flat at the top of their riverside house in Putney, and he nursed her when she was dying. They remarried on her deathbed. Both their daughters, Flannetta and Melissa, are painters and survive him.

WING COMMANDER DOUGLAS GRICE

Wing Commander Douglas Grice, MBE, DFC, fighter ace, died on March 24 aged 79. He was born on June 15, 1919.

AFTER joining No 32 Squadron while it was still flying biplane fighters in August 1938, Douglas Grice served with it for the rest of his career as an operational pilot, a period of intensive air fighting. After eight combat victories in the Battle of France and the Battle of Britain he was shot down in flames on August 15, 1940, and did not fly on operations again.

A week or two after he had joined No 32, the squadron exchanged its Gauntlets for Hurricanes, a transition which gave Grice not as many problems as some, since he had flown Magister monoplane at his elementary flying training school at Woodley, near Reading.

When war came the squadron was ready to go and chafing at the bit. Flying from Biggin Hill, Grice and No 32 were soon in the thick of the action in the fierce air battles which raged unseen in the skies high over the British Expeditionary Force as it fought its way back to the sea. On May 18 Grice had his first taste of combat, and came away with a "probable" Messerschmitt 110. Next day there was no room for doubt when he brought down two Me109s — kills which were confirmed.

The following day he shot down another Me109 and on the 22nd a fourth, giving him the satisfying tally of four kills in four days. By the time the Battle of France ended he was already an "ace" with five combat victories.

But this was not before he had been shot down once himself. On June 8, while he was attacking a formation of three Heinkel bombers over northern France, he was hit by cannon fire. His glycol coolant tank was punctured and his engine stopped. Clinging down from 9,000 ft he selected a large field and put down in it, fervently hoping he was not in a part of France that had already been overrun by the Germans.

In fact, he had landed near Rouen, still just clear of the advancing German armies.

Hot from his exertions and handed what he took to be a glass of water by the commanding officer of a neighbouring British artillery regiment, Grice gratefully gulped it down only to find himself gasping for breath as what was in fact *marc* — a colourless grape spirit — made its fiery way down his throat. A

few days later he was back at Biggin Hill ready to rejoin the air battle. Soon after his return he learnt that he had been awarded the DFC.

After a brief lull the Battle of Britain began and Grice had further kills. He was shot down for the second time in July, while engaging a force of three Me109s over Deal. Electing not to bale out since he was over water, he gently guided his Hurricane back over land and put down in a field alongside Sandwich golf course. His final day of combat flying was August 15 when, after shooting down an Me109, he received a hit in his fuel tank from an incendiary bullet. With his aircraft in flames he rolled it over, pushed his cockpit canopy loose and fell out.

He sustained quite severe burns but, as the plastic



surgery pioneer Archibald MacIndoe was later to tell him, he was fortunate to have come down in the sea. "You're a lucky chap because you are going to look handsome without any help from me. Thanks to you and others we have discovered that a brine bath is the best treatment for a bad burns case."

After a spell in hospital Grice found that his nerve had gone for operational flying. However, he continued his career as a fighter controller and was lucky enough to be posted to Northolt where he was a WAAF officer, Pam Beecroft, whom he had long been wooing, was also posted as a cipher officer. They were married in October 1941. Grice spent the rest of the war in staff and fighter controller posts, retiring as a wing commander in 1947. He had been appointed MBE in 1946.

Thereafter he qualified as a solicitor, becoming a partner in the London firm McKenna & Co, where he specialised in construction industry cases. He finally retired in 1982 to enjoy his garden at Chalfont St Giles, Buckinghamshire.

His wife Pam died last year. He is survived by their son and daughter.

PERSONAL COLUMN

DEATHS

TOSIN - Dr Joseph, aged 85, (Anaesthetist and General Practitioner) of Welwyn Garden City, after a long illness and a short stay in hospital, cremation at Barnet Crematorium, Stevenage on May 4th at 10.15 am. No flowers. Donations if wished to The Salvation Army c/o J J Burgess & Son, Funeral Directors, Alfred House, The Common, Hatfield, Hertfordshire AL10 0ND. Tel 01707 262122.

VARLEY - Patricia on 22nd April peacefully at home in Douglas. Beloved wife of the late Gilbert Alec. Funeral April 28th at 10 am. For information telephone 01634 67109.

WILLIAMS - Margaret Joan on 24th April 1999 at The Princess Margaret Hospital, Windsor, peacefully after a lengthy illness, loved wife of Susan and grandmother of Jeremy and Timothy. Following a private cremation service there will be a service of thanksgiving to her memory at St Michael's and All Angels, Church Lane, Sunninghill on Friday 30th April at 1.00 pm. Donations in lieu of flowers to MENCAP, 123 Clove Lane, London EC1V 0RT.

WILLIAMS - Thomas Andrew (Tommy), formerly of Highgate and Fulham, peacefully on Thursday 22nd April aged 92. Brother of Elizabeth and Anne, father of Alan and Andrea, grandfather of Doreen, James and Zayla. Funeral at Golders Green Crematorium on Friday 7th May at 3 pm. No flowers. Donations to Star and Garter Home c/o Holmes & Daughters, 481 Upper Richmond Road, West London, SW14 7PU.

IN MEMORIAM - PRIVATE

TILLMAN - Malka (née Elvin) Beloved wife of Mel. Unsurpassed sister of Rita. Remembered with love.

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CATHERINE, wishing you a happy birthday and many happy returns.

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THE FUNERAL OF LORD BEACONSFIELD

The funeral of the Earl of Beaconsfield, solemnized yesterday on his own estate of Hughenden Manor, in the midst of the pleasant county of Buckinghamshire, with which he had an association so honourable and so enduring, was a touching and affecting spectacle.

On a green hill there were collected a greater number, perhaps, of illustrious and well-known personages than ever assembled in one place in the open air so far away from the capital. The first impressive and unmistakable feature of the gathering was the unaffected regret, the sincere and evidently unexaggerated feeling of sorrow and admiration.

The Queen had testified her regret and esteem in many ways, and among others by sending a wreath of wild flowers, primroses plucked in the Isle of Wight, and such as he delighted to see blooming on the grassy banks of Hughenden Park. On a card affixed to this wreath was

ON THIS DAY

April 27, 1881

It was expected that the great statesman would be accorded a public funeral. But he had directed that his funeral be simple. Protocol forbade the Queen from attending but later in the year she visited his grave.

written, in Her Majesty's own handwriting, "His favourite flowers: from Osborne, a tribute of affection and regret from Queen Victoria".

When the hedge, which flanks a part of the garden had been passed, the way was bordered by the Buckinghamshire Volunteers in dark green uniform. Behind them stood, on the sloping sides of the path, several rows of spectators, all bare-headed, as those who walked in the procession also were. Men and boys

had clambered into the trees on each side to see over the rest of the people. The procession passed in silence into the churchyard, where many political personages, and others were collected.

Here the Wycombe Volunteer Fire Brigade, clad in serviceable blue, kept the ground and preserved the graves from being trodden upon, although, in fact, but little was needed to restrain the throng, which was throughout, not orderly merely, but reverent. The well-kept graves, many planted with flowers, make the little God's acre look very sweet and lovable, like the Campo Santo in Rome, of which a hero of Lord Beaconsfield's said that it might make one in love with death to think one should be buried in so sweet a place.

Out of the sunlight the mourners passed into the obscurity of the church. Nearest the congregation were Mr Disraeli, gray-headed, but in other respects resembling his brother, and Mr Coningsby Disraeli; opposite were the Princes of the Royal House. On the vacant seat of the late Earl was laid a wreath of gardenias and maidenhead fern.



Vickers brings down Anelka, the PFA Young Player of the Year, to concede the penalty that set Arsenal on their way to a perfect six on Saturday. Photograph: Allsport

Anelka makes a striking impact at the Riverside

Every Saturday (and, these days, Sunday) evening, supporters gather at overcrowded motorway service stations and in draughty railway buffets to pore over the day's results, digest the consequences (often easier than digesting the food on offer) and work out how many places their team has risen or fallen. Fallen, more often than not.

The snatches of conversation overheard in such situations are the very stuff of football. "So if Bristol City don't win at Crewe on Tuesday, then that means..." but don't forget that Port Vale play Bury on the last day... "Oxford have played one game more than the others..." And then it's back on to the M1, or out on to the platform at Crewe. We've all been there and drunk the tea. Or tried to.

Entrants in *The Times Fantasy League*, however, can find out news that affects their teams in the comfort of their own homes. As the scores came in on television this weekend, Donald Henry, a resident of Leicestershire, noticed that a number of players in his Fantasy team, Haverock, had enjoyed good days, and yesterday he learned that he had won the weekly prize of £500 plus £100 worth of sports equipment.

Mr Henry, 44, a civil engineer, admits to being a supporter of Nottingham Forest. I'm afraid, the only nearby top division team when he moved to the East Midlands,

although his true loyalties are to Aberdeen. Steve Stone, now with Aston Villa, and Carlton Palmer are the only Forest connections in his 40-point scorers, but there is a local connection: clean sheets against Liverpool and Coventry City meant that six points were contributed by Matt Elliott of Leicester City. "Another Scotsman," Mr Henry laughed. "It's funny

when he's interviewed. There's not much brogue there."

David Ginoia notched eight points, thanks to two goals and an assist. "Two goals in the last week, his only goals in the league. You get one bit of luck and it all comes your way," Mr Henry said.

The form of Nicolas Anelka was the best news of all: even though he was relegated to

the bench for Arsenal's 5-1 victory over Wimbledon last Monday, Anelka returned with a vengeance against Middlesbrough at the Riverside Stadium on Saturday.

He was fouled by Steve Vickers for the first goal, Marc Overmars putting away the penalty kick, he scored twice himself and gained a further assist. That's ten points to you, if you had the enigmatic young Frenchman in your team. His award of PFA Young Player of the Year on top of all this might persuade him that his future lies at Highbury rather than on the bench at the Nou Camp.

Other points-scorers in the Haverock team were Alan Wright (5), Mart Poom and Frank Leboeuf (3), Eyal Berkovic (2) and Steve Watson (1). Big Carlton and Darren Huckerby failed to trouble the scorers.

Even if your team cannot match Mr Henry's 40 points, you still have a chance to win a cash prize in the ON-Target competition. If your team total based on the player lists (right) is 11, 12 or 13, follow the instructions below and you could win £500.

For legal reasons, *The Times Fantasy League* is no longer able to accept entries from players under 18 years of age. Players 17 years and under already registered in the main and youth leagues will, however, be allowed to remain in the competition.

CHOOSE YOUR PLAYERS FROM HERE

Columns show: code, name, club, weekly points, total points, valuation(m).					
GOALKEEPERS					
102	D Seaman	ARS	0	43	3.7
149	A Hinchey	AST	0	12	3.3
139	M Boudry	AST	0	12	3.3
140	M Boudry	AST	0	12	3.3
109	J Vane	BLA	0	6	2.8
127	T Flowers	BLA	0	6	2.8
104	S Hogg	CHA	0	0	1.5
109	R Seaman	CHA	0	0	1.5
106	A Petterson	CHA	0	0	1.5
134	S Hogg	CHA	0	0	1.5
137	M Seaman	CHA	0	0	1.5
138	E De Gooij	CHA	0	0	1.5
107	S Hogg	CHA	0	0	1.5
107	S Hogg	CHA	0	0	1.5
117	M Seaman	CHA	0	0	1.5
133	M Seaman	CHA	0	0	1.5
112	P Seaman	CHA	0	0	1.5
114	P Seaman	CHA	0	0	1.5
118	T Hogg	CHA	0	0	1.5
125	M Seaman	CHA	0	0	1.5
123	K Hogg	CHA	0	0	1.5
122	P Seaman	CHA	0	0	1.5
131	D Seaman	CHA	0	0	1.5
109	M Seaman	CHA	0	0	1.5
121	M Seaman	CHA	0	0	1.5
109	M Seaman	CHA	0	0	1.5
111	M Seaman	CHA	0	0	1.5
141	S Hogg	CHA	0	0	1.5
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Come in No 30,508, your time is up

EDS

Here, exclusive to *The Times*, are the final set of finishers under the ChampionChip timing system in the 1999 Flora London Marathon. The information is provided by EDS, official suppliers of computers to the race, and today includes all those who ran between 5hr 56min 49sec and 7hr 38min 44sec, when the automatic timing system closed.

C Drew 5:56:49; A Parsons 5:56:49;
L Martin 5:56:51; D Owen 5:56:51;
J Murphy 5:56:53; P Campbell
5:56:54; J Randall 5:56:55; E Kyri-
akides 5:56:56; J Baley 5:56:58; I
Orton 5:57:00; L Diamond
5:57:01; W Young 5:57:04; D Tay-
lor 5:57:09; P Field 5:57:10; R
Clark 5:57:10; T Jackson 5:57:11; K
Kaman 5:57:12; M Braillich
5:57:12; D Smith 5:57:12; F Tarcea

W Rarcilffe 6:05:38; R Packer 6:05:39; F Frank 6:05:39; M Davis 6:05:40; D Kichen 6:05:43; J Troland 6:05:43; G Martin 6:05:44; R Clarke 6:05:50; S Tim 6:05:53; S Maxey 6:05:53; J Davidson 6:05:54; S Chorley 6:05:56; W Nixon 6:05:57; W Nixon 6:05:58; S Yusufi 6:05:59; J Gage 6:06:00; N Griffiths 6:06:01; C Senior 6:06:05; C Flint 6:06:07; T Lu 6:06:08; M Gra-

2901-1 Bradley 5571-7; E Lange-
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Cold showers provide total refreshment for the competitors in the Marathon as they run round the London Arena

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

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What Cate did next

Arts, page 37

BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

TUESDAY APRIL 27 1999

Carpetbaggers victorious as 62 per cent opt for conversion and possible £1,000

Bradford & Bingley members vote for windfalls

By SUSAN EMMETT

MORE than three million savers and borrowers with the Bradford & Bingley Building Society are set to receive windfalls of up to £1,000 each after 62 per cent of members who voted opted for conversion to a stock market quoted bank.

The result — the first time a society's board has been defeated on a motion to convert — raises questions over the future of other building societies. Nationwide, the UK's largest building society, which has already defeated two motions to convert, remained defiant yesterday. It said: "It is by no means inevitable that other societies will have to convert."

Graham Leftwich, a spokesman for Britannia, said: "The decision is disappointing, but it is simply a poll of Bradford & Bingley members. It has no bearing on Britannia's future."

Christopher Rodrigues, chief executive, and a vociferous supporter of mutualism, said after yesterday's annual meeting that he would not be stepping down. "When I joined Bradford & Bingley, I thought it had great potential," he said. "I still think it has great potential."

But Stephen Major, the Northern Ireland plumber who put forward the pro-conversion resolution, said he would be withdrawing completely as he had no interest in becoming a member of the board. After the result he said: "I played it low key and kept out of the limelight. I think that is what swayed it."

One spokesman for a smaller building society, however, conceded: "As much as I hate to admit it, this vote means that carpetbagging will be back with a vengeance. People



Screen test Lindsay Mackinlay, chairman of Bradford & Bingley Building Society, yesterday announcing his regret at the outcome of the vote

will be looking for the next target to go for."

Mr Rodrigues blamed the defeat on lower savings rates and said a considerable proportion of non-carpetbaggers had also voted for conversion.

Angela Carr, a saver living near Bingley who attended yesterday's meeting, said: "The interest rates are very, very poor. They don't stand up. It would take me years to get £500 for my savings."

The result has also raised questions over whether the society, which could have a value of about £2.5 billion, would float as an independent entity or be sold to any of the acquisitive players in the sector.

Lloyds TSB as well as AXA, the French financial services giant, are cited as likely predators.

A spokesman for Bradford & Bingley said: "The board has to consider any reasonable approaches. It would not be surprising if there were some."



Rodrigues: "great potential"



Major: out of the limelight

What next for the remaining mutuals?

By PAULA HAWKINS

THE decision by the Bradford & Bingley to convert to a quoted company will trigger a new wave of carpetbaggers seeking building society windfalls. But pickings are now slim, with most of the societies now requiring new members to sign away windfall rights.

Yorkshire: At the Yorkshire's AGM two weeks ago, 90 per cent of voting members supported mutualism. New members must sign away windfall rights.

Portsmouth: The society, seen as the carpetbagger's choice, has ended restrictions on opening accounts, but members have decided that any conversion plan will require a majority of 75

per cent of savers and more than half of borrowers. Coventry: New accounts can be opened, but new members must sign away windfall rights.

Skipton: The minimum opening balance is £2,000 and may increase. The Skipton is probably too small for conversion, but is seen as a viable takeover target.

Leeds & Holbeck: New accounts accepted, but members must sign away windfall rights. The minimum investment starts at £1,000.

Derbyshire: Limits new accounts to local investors. West Bromwich: Accounts can be opened with £1,000. There are no restrictions.

G7 in turmoil over plans for financial crises

FROM ANATOLE KALETSKY IN WASHINGTON

SERIOUS differences yesterday emerged between leading industrial countries over plans to prevent crises in the world monetary system and to help developing countries to cope with the recent financial shocks.

Finance ministers and central bankers from the G7 countries yesterday expressed general satisfaction about the prospects for the world economy, but behind the scenes there were serious disagreements between America, the euro countries and Britain over detailed proposals to cope with emerging market financial crises.

Joseph Stiglitz, the World Bank's chief economist, gave warning that the true costs of the recent financial turmoil have not yet emerged.

Estimates of the number of people living in extreme poverty in Indonesia have more

than doubled over the past two years, while estimates of the number of people living in extreme poverty in the states of the former Soviet Union has risen from 14 million in 1989 to 147 million before the latest Russian financial crisis.

James Wolfensohn, President of the World Bank, also criticised the G7 for proclaiming apparently generous schemes for debt relief to poor developing countries, while failing to agree on how these schemes would be financed.

The problem of Europe's representation in the G7 after monetary union was again raised, with US officials maintaining that euroland countries cannot be represented at G7 meetings by their national central bankers and by the President of the European Central Bank.

Economic View, page 31

Brown hedges bets with MPC appointee

By GRAHAM SEARJEANT, FINANCIAL EDITOR

THE market-reading skills of international hedge funds are to be brought to bear on deciding Britain's interest rates.

Gordon Brown, currently re-ordering world finance in Washington, paused yesterday to appoint Sushil Wadhvani, London partner in a \$3 billion US hedge fund, as one of five independent members of the Bank of England's nine strong rate-setting Monetary Policy Committee.

The opportunity comes because the committee is losing its first member, Sir Alan Budd, 61, former chief economic adviser at the Treasury, is to be Provost of The Queen's College, Oxford.

Dr Wadhvani, 39, swapped academic life at the London School of Economics, where he published more than a dozen papers on labour economics, first to be director of equity strategy at Goldman Sachs and for the past four years as

research director and partner in the Tudor Group.

Tudor is a US-based hedge fund operator founded by Paul Tudor Jones, a colourful environmentalist and friend of President Clinton, which manages about \$3 billion of wealthy clients' money. Dr



Wadhvani: successful

Wadhvani will cease to be a Tudor employee. At Goldman Sachs, Dr Wadhvani worked in the team led by Gavyn Davies, one of the architects of new Labour economics. But this probably has little to do with his selection.

Mr Davies said Dr Wadhvani spent 15 years developing big, quantitative valuation models to predict the course of bond, equity and currency prices. They helped him to win a 1995 investment strategy award from Institutional Investor. The magazine noted his successful prediction of falling bond prices in 1994.

He joins a coterie of present and past LSE academics on the MPC, including Mervyn King, Deputy Governor. He may be able to enlighten them on the niceties of earnings and on why sterling still keeps rising when they cut rates.

Commentary, page 29

CRS to cut 3,000 jobs as buying power is merged

By FRASER NELSON

MORE than 3,000 jobs are to go as part of a radical shake-up in the Co-operative Retail Society, which is to merge its buying power with the Co-operative Wholesale Society in a £4.5 billion deal.

Andy Meehan, CRS chief executive, has sold his ten Home-world furniture store buildings and 46 Living department stores for £149 million in cash. Every outlet is to be closed.

Kingfisher, the Woolworths to Comet retailer, is buying the Home-world buildings for £80.4 million. Miller Developments, a Scottish construction company, is paying £69 million for the "Living" department stores.

The deal will reduce the CRS to a chain of 469 grocery stores. Mr Meehan has pooled its £1.2 billion of buying power into the CRTG, a buying alliance organised by the CWS, which orders £3.3

billion of goods each year. The move will effectively create the fifth-largest force in British food retailing — with more buying power than William Morrison, Iceland or the recently merged Sainsbury and Marks & Spencer.

Mr Meehan, who joined the CRS five months ago with a brief to shake it up, has decided to ditch the "Co-operative" brand under which the CRS has been selling its own-label food for the past two years. It will instead use the traditional "Co-op" brand, produced by the CWS, which now runs 640 of its own stores.

Industry observers believe the decision to merge the food-buying and marketing departments could be the first step towards a full merger between the CRS and CWS.

Co-op conundrum, page 31

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Better than expected
Anatole Kaletsky on economic surprises
Page 31

STOCK MARKET MOVES

FTSE 100	5008.5	(+75.8)
Yield	2.12%	
FTSE All Share	2002.72	(+28.09)
Nikkei	10918.51	(+4.74)
New York		
Dow Jones	10695.88	(+6.01)*
S&P Composite	1359.09	(+2.24)*

US RATE

Federal Funds	4 1/4%	(4 1/4%)
Long bond	5 3/4%	(5 3/4%)
Yield	5.65%	(5.65%)

LONDON MONEY

3-month sterling	5%	(5%)
Libor long gilt	115.49	(115.80)
Libor (short)		

STERLING

New York		
\$	1.6117*	(1.6157)
London	1.6120	(1.6169)
€	1.5312	(1.5189)
¥	115.10	(115.20)
Yen	191.36	(193.05)
£ index	104.2	(104.2)

COMMODITIES

London		
Oil	1.0580*	(1.0620)
Gold	1.5710*	(1.5820)
Silver	118.10	(118.20)
£ index	104.2	(104.2)

TOKYO CLOSE YEN 118.85

NORTH SEA OIL

Brent 15-day (oil)	\$15.46	(\$15.70)
Oil		

6000

London close	\$281.15	(\$283.45)
* denotes midday trading prices		
Exchange rates — Page 28		

NET PROFITS
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Online move lifts shares in WH Smith

SHARES in WH Smith, which were 45p last summer, rose a further 38p to 778p yesterday as the high street retailer launched WHSmith Online, its new Internet division (Chris Ayres writes).

However, Richard Handover, chief executive, said that there were no plans to float it.

Many see the division as a response to Freeserve — the free Internet access business that Dixons launched last year and which has attracted 15 million account holders. Dixons is considering a £2.5 billion flotation of Freeserve.

WHSmith Online will offer free Internet access, and shopping facilities.

Stock market, page 30

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Nomura unrest clouded Park's departure

A WHISPERING campaign and a clampdown on bonuses at Nomura International were part of the volatile mix that led to last week's abrupt departure of Mungo Park, the Japanese bank's head of technology and healthcare.

Mr Park's enemies at Nomura, including Kevin Sara, head of technology, alleged that the bank was losing business because of Mr Park's controversial past. Mr Park was accused by the Serious Fraud Office of conspiring fraudulently to induce investments though he was formally acquitted

of the charges in 1993. Pieter Mulier, a top salesman who left Nomura a year ago after a fierce disagreement with Mr Park, compiled a dossier on these and other allegations that was shown to Kozo Yamazoe, head of corporate finance, and the firm's compliance department. Mr Yamazoe was initially satisfied that Mr Park had fully disclosed his past problems when joining Nomura.

However, Mr Sara continued to press the issue, concerned that someone with Mr Park's reputation was running a team that embraced sales, trading,

corporate finance and a £50 million proprietary investment book — raising complex compliance problems. Tensions at Nomura were heightened by a clampdown on bonuses this year. Colleagues say Mr Sara was unhappy with his bonus, believed to be about £150,000 after tax.

The bonus clampdown, stemming from the Japanese parent company's £2 billion losses last year, is said to have prompted the recent departure of Nick Knight, the well-known strategist who is thought to have made about £15 million profit for the firm

last year. Nomura International, the London arm, also suffered a big loss, much of it on Russian bonds. Several of last year's technology issues have performed badly, notably Union Technology, an Italian computer company floated in France.

A Nomura spokeswoman said yesterday that Mr Park had been given a clean bill of health by the Securities and Futures Authority.

In a recent reorganisation at Nomura, Mr Park lost responsibility for the "BBFB" — the biotech bottom-fishing book, the portfolio of large holdings

in biotech companies that he initiated. Mr Park's departure has called into question Nomura's commitment to the biotechnology sector and to its stakes, of up to 25 per cent, in many loss-making biotech firms.

The BBFB is currently showing a profit of about £20 million on investments that cost some £35 million. One Nomura insider insisted that the bank remained committed to the BBFB, and would respond aggressively to any attempt to drive share prices lower.

PAUL DURMAN

FSA seizes assets of Manchester stockbroker

By GAVIN LUMSDEN

THE assets of a Manchester stockbroker who operated illegally and preyed on the city's Asian community have been seized by the Financial Services Authority.

On Friday the FSA won a High Court injunction enabling it to seize the assets of Shankernath Lukka, an unauthorised trader from Didsbury, Manchester, and make an immediate payment of £1.5 million to his investors.

This is the first time the City watchdog has been granted the power to seize the assets of an individual directly and demonstrates the gravity of the situation.

Granting the injunction Mr Justice Neuberger said it appeared that Mr Lukka, a South African-born Asian who also claimed to hold a Greek passport, had been "flagrantly and persistently dishonest".

Although apparently a Hindu by religion Mr Lukka is believed to have contacted most of his victims through Muslim temples in the Manchester area. Worshippers were encouraged to give Mr Lukka up to £200,000 on the back of high guaranteed returns which he claimed could be obtained on the stock market and foreign exchange. Upon receipt of their money Mr Lukka gave investors post-dated cheques that were supposed to represent their total returns. Only a few of these cheques have been successfully cashed.

Mr Lukka is believed to have put money from at least 30 groups of investors through a bank account set up in his name. The FSA's move means that investors should receive at least part of their money back. This is unusual as there is no established safety net for people who have given money to unauthorised investment companies. However, full compensation is unlikely as Mr Lukka's assets — believed to be mostly comprised of his house and car — are not expected to be worth more than £250,000. Mr Lukka was not present in court and his whereabouts are not known.

The FSA's investigation into Mr Lukka began last December after it completed an earlier case against an illegal deposit taker, Sahib Saini of Rochdale, Lancashire. Mr Saini had invested some of the money he had attracted from savers with Mr Lukka.

The latest scandal highlights the lack of apparent access that ethnic minorities have with established providers of financial services and will add fuel to the debate on financial exclusion.

Peps get farewell boost

PEP investors gave Britain's favourite take-away a rousing send-off, pumping £2.5 billion into personal equity plans in March alone, £1 billion more than the same month last year (Gavin Lumsden writes).

According to the Association of Unit Trusts and Investment Funds (Autif), sales continued to surge into the first week of April — the last week Peps were available — adding £624 million to the influx. This took the total for the first quarter of 1999 to £4.1 billion, up from £2.9 billion in 1998's first quarter.

However, the total of Peps open rose only 6 per cent, to 12.2 million, last month. Autof said, indicating that activity was mainly by existing holders.

Most investors rejected investing abroad, and UK funds took £1.78 billion of March's figure, Autof said.



Don Cruickshank, who said that the Scottish dimension of his new job had interested him

Cruickshank to replace Macdonald at SMG

By RAYMOND SNOODY, MEDIA EDITOR

SCOTTISH MEDIA GROUP, the television and newspapers combine, has appointed the Government's chief millennium bug buster as its new chairman.

Don Cruickshank, the former director of OfTel, the telecommunications industry regulator, who currently heads the Government's Action 2000 campaign, will take over as SMG chairman in June.

Mr Cruickshank, who is also carrying out a review of Britain's retail banks for the

Government, replaces fellow Scot Lord Macdonald of Tradeston, the Scottish Industry Minister. Calum MacLeod, the acting chairman, resumes his role as deputy chairman of SMG.

SMG, the fourth-largest independent television company in Britain, holding the ITV franchises north of the border. Its interests also include The Herald newspaper in Glasgow. Mr Cruickshank, 56, said the "Scottish dimension" of his new job had interested him.

SMG, meanwhile, has launched a review of its interactive publishing activities with the likelihood that it will expand its Delphic Interactive subsidiary.

Delphic designs and maintains websites and its customers include Celtic Football Club. One of the options under consideration by SMG will be the launching of an ISP, or Internet service provider, business with partners. Shares in SMG ticked up 1½p to 868p yesterday.

British business ignores the euro

By CARL MORTSHED, INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS EDITOR

BRITISH businesses are largely ignoring the euro. A survey of transactions by firms outside of the banking sector in the first month of the new currency showed no evidence that sterling or the mighty dollar were being supplanted.

Only 1 per cent of all transactions conducted by the 403 firms surveyed by KPMG Consulting was conducted in euro during the 19 business days in January.

More encouraging for supporters of the new currency was evidence that the euro is making an impact in transactions between Britain and euroland member-states. The euro is capturing 16 per cent of the deals that would have been done in eurozone legacy currencies (the French franc, German mark and Italian lira).

However, in transactions between Britain and the rest of the world, the euro is only just appearing on radar screens, with a 1 per cent share of the deals, compared with 51 per cent of transactions conducted in sterling and 37 per cent in US dollars.

KPMG Consulting said it intends to publish its survey quarterly, incorporating its "euro-creep index" that measures the growth of use in the currency. The score at the end of January was 16 per cent for displacement of legacy currencies, 1 per cent for total euro-creep (euro share of all transactions) and nil for domestic euro-creep (UK to UK transactions).

Leo Martin, senior economist at KPMG, commented: "Assuming nothing goes horribly wrong, we would expect the euro to move from 1 per cent overall to 6 per cent as it displaces legacy currencies. The interesting question is whether it begins to make inroads into the dollar and sterling."

Britain in Europe, the lobby group, said that UK plc had been quick to seize the opportunity to use the currency, pointing out that one sixth of UK-euroland transactions were in euros. It predicted: "Before too long, we may see the euro displacing some of the other currencies used in the UK."

Japanese motor production slips

JAPAN'S motor vehicle output for the year to March dipped below ten million units for the first time in 20 years. Annual output volume fell 7.5 per cent compared with the previous year, to 9.97 million units, its lowest since the year to March 1979 and the first annual fall for three years, the Japan Automobile Manufacturers' Association said yesterday. A spokeswoman for the association said: "The prolonged recession in Japan and the economic slump in Asia contributed to the drop."

Analysts said that the slide would put pressure on Japanese manufacturers to cut surplus production lines, worth more than three million units. The annual output of cars fell 3.7 per cent to 8.07 million units and that of trucks slumped 21.1 per cent to 1.94 million units.

Terranova open to bid

THE board of Terranova, the food group spun out of Hillsdown Holdings, suggested yesterday that it could be amenable to recommending a bid — if the price was right. Terranova yesterday told shareholders to reject the 125p a share hostile offer being made by Unigate, the dairy firm. Terranova's second defence document, published yesterday, reiterated its objection to the bid on grounds that at 125p — or £228.5 million for the group — it gave shareholders little or no premium for change of control.

Wensum advances

THE WENSUM COMPANY, the clothing manufacturer, reported pre-tax profits up 14 per cent to £1.54 million for the year to January 30. Turnover was £15.72 million, up from £14.56 million. Earnings per share were 14.24p, compared with 11.79p last year and the interim dividend of 3.45p (3.425p) takes the total for the year to 5.1p (5p). Andrew Hughes, chairman, said that the current year has started well with "excellent" order books.

Strong growth at SBS

SBS GROUP, the AIM-listed IT staffing business, yesterday reported pre-tax profit up 138 per cent to £1.6 million for the six months to February 28. Turnover rose at a similar rate to £28.3 million on the back of two acquisitions during the period. Organic growth in turnover was 43 per cent. Earnings per share were 9.64p (4.82p) and the interim dividend is 1.5p per share (1p). John Davies, chairman, said: "We are still experiencing healthy demand for our services."

Halladale sells sites

HALLADALE GROUP, a property company based in Scotland, has sold a portfolio of nine retail investment properties to an unnamed overseas purchaser for £5.1 million. The properties, in town centres in England and Wales, are let to a variety of retail chains including Our Price and John Menzies. Current rental income is about £380,000 per year, giving a net yield of 7.06 per cent.

Chewits maker is sold

THE company that makes Chewits fruit chews is being sold for £390 million (£250 million). Chewits is currently owned by Leaf, which is controlled by Huhtamaki, the Finnish group. Leaf is being bought by CSM, the Dutch confectioner. The purchase price is 13 times Leaf's operating profits, but is less than its annual sales of £420 million. Leaf has its strongest market positions in Scandinavia and in medicated lozenges.

KCA wins Shell deal

KCA DRILLING, a subsidiary of Abbot, the oil services group, has been awarded a drilling contract worth £200 million for Shell's oilfields in the North Sea. Shell UK Exploration & Production said the five-year contract would cover all nine of its fixed-production platforms. Alasdair Locke, Abbot chairman, said the effect on revenues would be determined by the anticipated pick-up in activity levels in the industry.

EXCHANGE RATES

	Bank Buys	Bank Sells		Bank Buys	Bank Sells
Australia \$	2.08	2.41	Japan Yen	207.01	189.48
Austria Sch.	21.92	20.26	Malta	0.680	0.621
Belgium F.	84.54	59.58	Netherlands Gld.	3.542	3.247
Canada C.	2.52	2.24	New Zealand \$	3.09	2.88
Cyprus Cyp £	0.9225	0.8510	Norway Kr.	13.18	12.24
Denmark Kr.	11.89	11.00	Portugal Esc.	317.39	295.36
Egypt	5.71	5.10	S. Africa Rd.	10.42	9.40
Finland Mks.	8.80	8.85	Spain Ptas.	264.51	245.72
France Fr.	10.44	9.66	Sweden Kr.	14.33	13.23
Germany Dr.	3.188	2.889	Switzerland S.	2.590	2.372
Greece Dr.	322	453	Turkey Liras	649924	601124
Hong Kong \$	13.34	12.14	USA \$	1.721	1.578
India Rupee	130	110			
Indonesia	17559	12559			
Israel P.	1.2521	1.1631			
Italy Lira	6.93	6.27			
	3120	2763			

Rates for small denomination banknotes only as supplied by Barclays Bank. Different rates apply to traveller's cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.

ASW plans to shed 400

NEARLY 400 steelworkers' jobs are to go as the loss-making ASW group begins a shake-out of a rival steelmaker that it bought in January (Christine Buckley writes).

ASW will close a bar mill at its Cardiff premises, with the loss of 230 jobs, and shut a furnace and rod mill at its site at Sheerness, Kent, with the loss of 160 jobs. The Sheerness jobs will go at the end of July, and

the curbs at Cardiff is to be at the end of September. Both sites are part of Co-Steel Sheerness, the steelmaker bought for £40 million by ASW.

Graham Mackenzie, ASW chief executive, said: "The rationalisation programme, whilst a radical move, is a positive step in the restructuring of ASW and is one aspect of the significant opportunities that are available in returning the company

to profitability." The cuts will cost ASW £15 million to implement. On top of that, the company is investing £4.7 million in the Cardiff business and £5 million at Sheerness.

ASW, which employs more than 1,750 people, last month said that its losses had deepened to £22 million last year, from £5.8 million. It blamed the poor steel market throughout the UK and northern Europe.

PPL considers US option

PPL THERAPEUTICS, the drug development company best known for cloning Dolly the sheep, may be forced to locate a £45 million production plant in the US because of the difficulty of obtaining finance in the UK (Paul Durman writes).

PPL said that it would prefer to have a new plant near its existing pilot facility at its Roslin headquarters, near

Edinburgh. However, Ron James, chief executive of PPL, fears that British banks would be reluctant to provide loan or lease finance on attractive terms.

He said: "It's difficult if you are a loss-making biotech company. In the US, they can point to biotech companies that are making profits. There are so many biotech companies in the US that, even if we

were to fail, another company could come along and occupy the plant."

PPL, which reported losses rising from £10.2 million to £14.2 million last year, needs a plant to process milk from genetically modified sheep to extract an enzyme that it hopes to use to treat cystic fibrosis. The company ended 1998 with cash and investments of about £25 million.

Defence projects to protect jobs

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

THOUSANDS of jobs in the defence industry were protected yesterday by the Government's decision to go it alone on a frigate building programme and also to proceed with a three-country air defence project.

The Ministry of Defence said yesterday that it was withdrawing from the troubled Horizon frigate programme, which it had been working on with France and Italy, in favour of its own initiative.

Defence analysts said that the decision would bring more work to the UK on the multi-billion-pound programme to replace Type 23 destroyers and that the work could start sooner.

The MoD is aiming to build 12 new vessels by 2007. Initially it had wanted a launch date of 2004 but talks between the three countries have been long and problematic, eventually

foundering on the allocation of work. The building of the frigates is unlikely to generate work for the Govan shipyard on the Clyde, which has been put up for sale by its Norwegian owner, Kvaerner, as the shipyards of VSEL are more suited to warship work.

The UK Government has, however, reached agreement with France and Italy to build together the Principle Anti-Air Missile System (PAAMS) defence system for the new generation of frigates.

Matra British Aerospace Dynamics, the Anglo/French joint venture, will be the main contractor on the UK variant of PAAMS, bringing work worth about £700 million to the UK. A spokesman for BAe said: "We look forward to working closely with the Ministry of Defence to produce the world's most advanced missile defence system."

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No. 2509 of 1999

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE

CHANCERY DIVISION

COMPANIES COURT

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT 1985

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Cook's tour of the great and good

COMMENTARY
by our City Editor

Not many new companies can enlist the help of a former President of the United States to do their public relations work for them but Global Crossing is one that can.

The business, which has just agreed to pay \$550 million for Cable & Wireless's Global Marine Division, is a company with connections. And in telecommunications, where commerce and politics tend to be intertwined, connections can be all important.

Global Crossing launched on the New York stock market last summer with its shares valued at \$19. An initial lack of enthusiasm saw them drift down as low as \$8, but yesterday they were up to almost \$57.

This will be cheering news for ex-President George Bush. Last year he did the company the favour of flying to Tokyo to explain what an excellent outfit it was. His reward came in the form of \$80,000 worth of shares. They are now worth more than \$15 million. Not a bad fee for a man hardly renowned for his oratory.

Mr Bush may now be volunteering to knock on a few more international doors for Global Crossing. But the company could probably call on the services of a raft of high-profile people to sing its praises.

The secret is in the identity of its co-chairman, Lod Cook. He was formerly the chairman of oil company Arco, recently swallowed into the giant BPAmoco

combine, and is a man whose gold-plated address book makes things happen. And not just in the United States, where his Republican allegiances have not precluded invitations to the Clinton White House.

Good works on a grand scale earned him an honorary KBE from Prince Charles. At Arco, he would host an annual dinner in London which top names from politics and industry would not miss. The last one, however, was no longer staged under the auspices of Arco: Global Crossing picked up the bill for the glittering evening. This was clearly a young company with grand ambitions.

They have not taken long to materialise. In February, the company enrolled AT&T's Bob Annucci as chief executive and snapped up a US telecoms company, Frontier. Today, it is valued at \$23.3 billion.

This has made Mr Cook's stake of just over 1 per cent worth having. It has made Gary Winnick the fastest-ever billionaire, in the careful judgment of *Forbes* Magazine. Mr Winnick, a former associate of bond dealer Michael Milken at Drexel Burnham Lambert, is co-chairman,

with Mr Cook. His stake in Global Crossing is rather larger, however — 23.42 per cent.

While that is already worth enough to pay for a good few banquets at Claridges, Mr Winnick is looking for more. The deal with Cable & Wireless is a step on the way, but some of those who have enjoyed Lod Cook's hospitality over the years are wishing they had bought his shares a little sooner.

Rodriguez does swift pirouette

Converting the Bradford & Bingley from building society to bank will take at least a year. The conversion of Christopher Rodriguez had to be accomplished rather more speedily. Yesterday morning he was a vehement supporter of mutualism. By yesterday evening he was coming round to the idea that B&B plc might not be such a bad

thing. He could envisage being chief executive of such an entity without feeling that his principles were being compromised.

His members' principles were all too clear, however. They put more value on cash in the hand than the more amorphous benefits of mutualism. When interest rates are down to current levels, the slightly more generous attitudes of the mutuals amount to little in pounds and pence, certainly not enough to leave savers or borrowers convinced that mutualism is worth preserving. It was B&B members who pushed the society into the demutualisation vote and they were more in touch with the prevailing mood than was Mr Rodriguez.

But he is not the child of a brace of ballet dancers for nothing. Executing a swift pirouette, he is now devising plans for a demutualised B&B as a "customer-led plc".

As a big idea, this is not revolutionary. Financial services busi-

nesses have spouted more than the fountains at Versailles about the need to be customer-focused. In theory, they all believe that this must be the way to earn long-term profits.

Yet when it comes to putting this theory into practice, far too often they opt for short-term profits over long-term customer loyalty. Northern Rock provided the most glaring example when, having forsaken its mutual status, it proceeded to juggle its customers' funds into accounts that distinctly disadvantaged them. The subsequent slow climb down was an unedifying sight.

If Mr Rodriguez can ensure that B&B plc hangs on to some of the warm glow of mutualism in its relations with its customers, he may have a recipe for growing the business. Shareholders, however, do impose new disciplines, and while they, too, might claim to understand the virtues of being customer-led, they have a nasty tendency to be profit driven.

The carpetbagging mentality is not confined to members of building societies or motoring organisations: institutional investors have the same tendencies.

Once B&B is floated and they have their shares, a swift takeover is probably what they would most like to see.

It really can be all at the Co-op now

When Andrew Regan made his ill-fated attempt to take over the CWS, his reasoning was sound: this was a business that deserved to be broken up. The problem was in the execution. Now there are suggestions that a cash-packed United States venture capital organisation is ready to try to succeed where he failed, with a £2 billion bid.

But the signs are that the Co-op may at last be deciding on the sort of remedial action that might make it deserving of a future. A merger between the CWS and the CRS is the sensible way forward for what used so proudly to be known as "the movement" (and, yes, there are smaller co-operative societies that still thrive but

for the purposes of this argument, it is the CRS and the CWS that now constitute TCMCO — this great movement of ours.)

They have not yet agreed to a fully fledged get-together. Given the fiercely fought objections to that in the past, it would be too abrupt a change. But after effectively putting the buying departments into one, it cannot be too long before the selling sides of the organisations realise the good sense of a full-blooded merger.

Then the organisation would be well placed to fight for its place in the grocery business, competing alongside Sainsbury, Marks & Spencer and the like. It may take a little while yet but the arcane structure of the Co-op probably means that even the most imaginative of US bidders will have to sit back and watch.

No token choice

UNDER the Government's new share-buying policy, the Bank of England has to advertise for directors. Yet the Chancellor's appointments to the MPC remain shrouded in the mists of patronage. That invites a cynical view that, having gathered a woman member and a euroland national, right on Gordon Brown has added an ethnic Asian. Sushil Wadhvani's resume suggests, on the contrary that we are lucky a youngish family man has made so much money in hedge funds that he can afford to take the job.

GEC launches \$4.5bn bid for Internet business

By CARL MORTIMER, INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS EDITOR

GEC has launched a takeover of Fore Systems, offering to pay \$4.5 billion (£2.8 billion) for the US company that specialises in the manufacture of Internet switching equipment.

Shares of the UK electronics group gained 29½p to 608½p, as the market welcomed evidence that GEC was putting flesh on the bones of its strategy to expand in telecoms.

GEC's offer, priced at 76 times the earnings of Fore Systems, also provided support yesterday for the recent surge in telecoms and Internet stocks.

Based in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Fore Systems makes networking equipment for large companies, as well as telecom and Internet service providers. Its biggest product, the AX4000 switch, enables data to be transferred down telephone wires, and some 70 per cent of all Internet traffic is reckoned to pass through Fore Systems' products. The company's stock price has soared from \$13 per share over the past month because of takeover speculation.

GEC is bidding \$35 per share for the company, a premium of 43 per cent to Friday's closing price. Net of cash balances, the cost to GEC will be \$4.2 billion and Lord Simpson, chief executive, admitted that it was not cheap. "It is the price of the technology and an annual growth rate of 30 to 35 per cent," he explained.

"We will now be in a position to capture the benefits of the impact of the growth of Internet and other data traffic on the demand for communications equipment and systems."

The bid follows last month's

acquisition of Relec, a network products company, for \$2.1 billion. GEC is keen to ally its existing telecoms equipment business, largely based on voice communication, with data communication products in an attempt to compete in the same markets as Lucent, its main competitor.

Lord Simpson added: "Fore Systems give us a similar footprint in terms of technology but we have a long way to catch up in sales. Our job now is to drive the organic growth."

Fore Systems was set up just nine years ago. In the year to last March it had revenues of \$632 million and operating income before interest and tax of \$55.4 million.

Products include asynchronous transfer mode, Internet protocol, gigabit ethernet and firewall switches but the company is also known for having helped to create the special effects for the film *Babe*.

Fore Systems's clients include NASA, the US Government, the US Department of Defense, service providers such as AT&T, Bell Atlantic, Deutsche Telekom and large corporates, including Boeing, Ford, Microsoft, Shell and Unisys.

Tempus, page 30



Splashing out: Nick Irens, left, and Harm Tegelaars, of Cannons, which is poised to buy 20 clubs in an all-share deal

First Leisure poised for break-up

By DOMINIC WALSH

MICHAEL GRADE, the former Channel 4 boss, appears to have thrown in the towel in his bid to repeat his success in the leisure arena. First Leisure, where he has been chief executive since 1997, yesterday admitted it was in talks to demerge its health and fitness business and sell it to Cannons Group in what appears to be the first stage of a break-up of the group.

First Leisure issued a statement confirm-

ing that it was a discussing an all-share merger between Cannons and its own health and fitness business. It said: "Such a merger would be effected through a separation of First Leisure's health and fitness business, and by Cannons issuing shares directly to First Leisure's shareholders."

Cannons, which is headed by Nick Irens, chairman, and Harm Tegelaars, chief executive, is effectively acquiring a business which operates 20 clubs, mainly under the Riverside and Esporta brands.

Neither company would elaborate, emphasising that the talks had "not yet reached a conclusion", although analysts believe it could double Cannons in size to between £500 million and £600 million.

First Leisure, which also operates bars, nightclubs and bowling centres, fuelled speculation of an eventual break-up by saying it continued to explore "other strategic initiatives for the rest of the group".

Tempus, page 30

C&W's disposal fetches £550m

By RAYMOND SNOODY, MEDIA EDITOR

CABLE & WIRELESS, the international telecommunications group, yesterday continued its programme of disposals with the £550 million sale of its Global Marine business to Global Crossing (See Commentary, this page).

Global Marine installs and maintains submarine telecom cable systems. Issale is the first disposal since Graham Wallace took over as C&W chief executive and is a further sign that the company is concentrating on the operation of communication networks including the Internet.

The deal also means that since C&W first announced a disposal programme in November 1997, about £1.2 billion has been raised. That total does not include the sale of a 20 per cent stake in Bouygues Telecom, expected to fetch more than £500 million.

The market reacted positively to the sale and C&W closed 67p up at 909p.

Under the deal Global Crossing, which is building an advanced fibre-optic telecommunications network spanning four continents, will pay C&W £450 million in cash and take on £100 million in third-party debt.

As part of the sale agreement, C&W will have a continuing relationship with Global Crossing for the installation and maintenance of its cables.

Merging holiday firms' chiefs to share millions

By DOMINIC WALSH

DIRECTORS of First Choice Holidays and Kuoni of Switzerland are to share several million pounds after the two companies announced a slimmer and completely reshaped board ahead of their planned merger.

The board of the enlarged Kuoni Holdings was to have been led by Ian Clubb, of First Choice, as executive chairman and Riccardo Gullotti, of the Swiss group, as chief executive. However, the two men have now agreed to step down to non-executive status and Peter Long, First Choice's managing director, will become chief executive.

Mr Gullotti, whose contract with Kuoni has already been terminated, will receive a total of £4.56 million in compensation, including £247,000 in pension contributions. Mr Clubb, meanwhile, will pocket compen-



Gullotti: gets £4.56 million

sation worth £543,000, equivalent to one year's salary, bonus and pension contributions. He will also be paid £150,000 a year for two years for his services as a non-executive director.

When the merger was announced last month the board was to have had nine execu-

tives and five non-executives. The reshaped board unveiled in the formal merger document posted to shareholders yesterday has just six executives and four non-executives.

Peter Diehl, head of Kuoni UK, is to continue in his British role, but will not now join the board. He has already received £4 million to buy him out of a profit share scheme. Three other Kuoni executives will each receive £730,000 for agreeing to waive their rights to compensation under a change of control clause.

Mr Clubb said a 14-strong board would have been too unwieldy. He said that he and Mr Gullotti had planned to step down after two years, with Mr Long due to succeed Mr Gullotti: "We decided it would be better to do it now."

The merger document puts the total cost of the merger at £25 million.

Takeover failure hits Jarvis

By RAYMOND SNOODY, MEDIA EDITOR

SHARES of Jarvis Hotels fell by 20p to 139p yesterday after the group announced that takeover talks with an unnamed party — widely believed to have been NH Hotels of Spain — have been terminated (Dominic Walsh writes).

Analysts believe that the three-star operator is still seeking a buyer. There were also suggestions that if its share price remains depressed, the management might seek to take the company private. Since flotation in 1996 the shares have rarely reached anywhere near its 175p launch price.

Sources close to Jarvis emphasised that the discussions with NH had been highly tentative, and had never progressed as far as due diligence.

JCDecaux adds to ads empire

By RAYMOND SNOODY, MEDIA EDITOR

JCDECAUX, the privately owned French group, yesterday claimed to have become the world's largest owner of "out of home" advertising after the £652 million acquisition of Havas Communications Outdoor Advertising.

Jean-Francois Decaux, chief executive of the company founded by his father in 1964, said yesterday the deal meant that JCDecaux now has more than 350,000 advertising structures in 31 countries.

Until now the group has been founded almost entirely on providing bus shelters for local authorities in return for the advertising space. The acquisition of the Havas outdoor advertising group which includes Mills & Allen in the UK, will add conventional outdoor billboards as well as advertising on buses and in airports.

The acquisition, hotly contested by Clear Channel and OSI of the US, will give JCDecaux annual revenues of about £800 million.

M Decaux said the company also hoped to float in London and New York through an initial public offering in the next couple of years. The company may also expand into mainstream media. "We will be looking at radio and, or, television," M Decaux said.

The media world is taking outdoor advertising more seriously as the fragmentation of television audiences and the rise of the Internet makes it more difficult to reach homes. Separately, reports that Carlton is about to buy Maiden the UK outdoor advertising operator were denied by both companies. Maiden's shares finished the day 26½p stronger at 404p.

Rate cuts aid Boot

Henry Boot, the construction group, said reservations for its property developments have been "significantly buoyed" by interest rate cuts and lower inflation, but orders for houses in its construction division are down as a result of competition and a drop in public sector contracts because of more governmental emphasis on Private Finance Initiative schemes.

Boot's 1998 pre-tax profits rose 5 per cent, to £10.6 million, on turnover up 6 per cent, to £172.1 million. Earnings per share rose 7 per cent to 29.1p. A 6.6p final dividend makes 9.1p, up 7 per cent.

BATM soars

BATM, the Israeli telecoms equipment maker, said a "multinational corporation" had signed a "non-binding letter of intent" to buy up to 9.9 per cent of it. Speculation that BATM may be bought by Cisco Systems, 3M or IBM lifted its shares 12 per cent to 585p, against 145p last year. Pre-tax profits more than doubled last year, to £2.25 million, on sales of £11.2 million, up 71 per cent. There is a 31.2p final dividend. Tempus, page 30

NET PROFITS

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STOCK MARKET

MICHAEL CLARK

Telecom deals boost confidence in FTSE

IT IS not often that London is able to ignore the strong influences across the pond on Wall Street. But that is exactly what happened yesterday as investors got the week off to a flying start in the City fuelled by a welter of corporate deals in the telecoms sector.

The FTSE 100 index finished 75.6 up at 6,503.6, having briefly touched a high for the day of 6,521.9.

Gains among second-liners were less spectacular with the FTSE 250 index rising just 4.1 at 5,788.6, as total turnover reached 972 million shares.

By contrast, the Dow Jones industrial average had reversed an opening gain of almost 40 points by the time business in the Square Mile drew to a close.

WH Smith, where Richard Handover is chief executive, was a strong market, adding 38p to 778p ahead of results on Thursday as the group announced details of the launch today of its Internet service, But Alex Brown, the broker, forecasts a drop in interim pre-tax profits from £128 million to £89 million.

Marks & Spencer came back 6p to 448p with dealers expressing scepticism about recent reports that Warren Buffett, the financier, had built up a 3 per cent stake in 200 shares.

There was no shortage of buyers for the telecoms sector amid evidence of further consolidation in the industry. Telewest rose 14p to 297p, while bid hopes bolstered Orange 3p to 844p.

British Telecom, up 53p at £10.47, is poised to spend £1.2 billion along with AT&T acquiring a 30 per cent stake in Japan Telecom, that country's third-largest operator. This comes hard on the heels of last week's proposed merger between Deutsche Telekom and Telecom Italia.

The breakdown in bid talks left Jarvis Hotels nursing a fall of 20p to 139p, after briefly touching 121p. One market-maker is known to have paid 135p for 100,000 shares, sparking suggestions that another bidder may be waiting in the wings. The talks carried on for more than a month with NH Hotels of Spain mentioned as the most likely suitor. Fresh support was shown for other hotel operators with Ladbrokes up 7p to 318p, Hano-



Richard Handover, with Estelle Morris, Schools Minister, saw WH Smith shares rise, ahead of the online launch.

ver International 4p to 119p, Stakis 7p to 175p and Jurys Hotel 2p to 57p.

Talk of a possible bid lifted Maidenhead 26p to 404p. Word is Carlton Communications, up 3p to 630p, is poised to make an offer valuing the outdoor advertising business at £170 million. Shares in Maiden are tightly held with Ron Zeghibe, chief executive,

holding almost 20 per cent of the company.

There was further speculative support for the insurance brokers. Cox Insurance rose 10p to 200p, Lambert Fenwick 3p to 89p and Bradfordstock 1p to 39p. Jardine Lloyd Thompson, down 5p to 226p, is said to be on the lookout for suitable acquisitions. Elsewhere in the insurance sec-

tor, the speculators are keeping a close eye on Independent Insurance, 2p easier at 23p. The price recently touched 307p on the back of results but has begun to drift back again on the absence of any fresh developments. Brokers will not doubt be paying close attention to the comments of Michael Bright, chief executive, at Thursday's annual meeting.

Speculative buying was good for a rise of 20p to 567p in Workspace. Rival Birkby recently bought a 20 per cent stake and could be poised to make a full bid for the property specialist.

It was the first day of dealings on Olex for NetBet (UK), the Alderney-quoted online betting service after a placing at 70p by Daniel Stewart, the issuing house. The price ended at 172p, a premium of 102p.

Arriva remained in reverse, falling 28p to 386p after Friday's surprise profits warning. The bus and train operator admitted that passenger numbers were down 2 per cent year-on-year.

Desire Petroleum enjoyed one of the best moves of the day, climbing 10p, to 26.5 per cent, at 50p. The price has slumped from a peak of 44p last year.

Stylo stood out with a rise of 3p to 42p as Michael Ziff, chief executive, picked up 25,000 shares at 39p, taking his total holding to 4.452 million shares or 7.47 per cent.

Abbot Group celebrated clinching a £200 million, five-year drilling contract with Shell by adding 14p to 153p.

United Overseas firmed 2p to 22p after Terry Balkham, finance director, bought 470,000 shares at 21p. He now holds 480,000 shares, or less than 1 per cent.

GIIT-EDGED: Traders were keeping a wary eye on sterling ahead of this week's G7 summit with investors taking a low-key approach. As a result prices were left to drift lower in this trading although selling pressure proved slight.

In the futures pit, the June series of the long gilt closed 41p down at £116.48, while among conventional issues Treasury 9 per cent 2008 firmed 44p to £132.68.

NEW YORK: Shares were steady in morning trade with investors continuing the return to technology issues. By midday the Dow Jones industrial average was up 6.01 at 10,695.68.

Meanwhile, Cable & Wireless, up 6p to 909p, is selling its global-marine division, which lays fibre-optic cable under the sea, to Global Crossing of the US for £550 million.

Brokers say GEC's acquisition of Fore Systems, the Pittsburgh-based Internet switching-systems specialist, for \$35 a share also takes it another step towards being listed as a telecoms supplier. That would lead to an automatic revaluation of the shares, up 29p to 608p.

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MAJOR INDICES

New York (midday):	
Dow Jones	10695.68 (+6.01)
S&P Composite	1359.00 (+2.24)
Tokyo:	
Nikkei Average	16918.51 (+7.70)
Hong Kong:	
Hang Seng	13127.02 (+221.72)
Amsterdam:	
AEX index	565.78 (+4.58)
Sydney:	
ASX 200	3128.7 (+8.0)
Frankfurt:	
DAX	5266.22 (+60.80)
Singapore:	
SEAC	1869.82 (+4.24)
Brussels:	
BE20	3244.07 (+11.32)
Paris:	
CAC-40	4284.40 (+21.97)
Zurich:	
SMI index	7254.1 (+108.9)
London:	
FT 100	6503.6 (+75.6)
FTSE 250	5788.6 (+41.1)
FTSE 350	3101.1 (+30.8)
FTSE Europe 100	3014.67 (+30.6)
FTSE All-Share	3002.72 (+29.0)
FTSE Non-Financials	3006.05 (+27.8)
FTSE Financials	154.71 (+2.2)
FTSE Govt Secs	110.79 (-0.26)
Bargains	78181
SEAO Volume	971.4m
US\$	1.6281 (-0.0041)
£/¥	0.6373 (+0.0007)
ESOR	1.1937
Exchange Index	104.2 (Same)
Bank on England official base (Apr)	5.75
151.1 Mar (2.75) Jan 1997=100	
151.2 Mar (2.75) Jan 1997=100	

REPORT ISSUES

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Mice Group nfp (80)	1
Veralliance nfp (05)	1

MAJOR CHANGES

RISES:	Close	Chng	Chng%
DOC Ind	102	+11	+12.0
Dow Jones	10695	+6	+0.06
Burtoned Bw	182	+17	+9.3
Abbot Group	153	+14	+9.2
SBS	172	+17	+9.9
Goldshield	380	+30	+7.9
Shield Day	432	+35	+8.1
Malden	404	+30	+7.4
Cable Wireless	770	+57	+7.4
Fitnes First	530	+39	+7.3
Chiroscience	221	+15	+6.8
Alcon	222	+15	+6.8
Stigdon Pharma	212	+15	+7.1
Appo	189	+12	+6.3
Hanson	621	+35	+5.6
Smith WH	104	+3	+3.3
TeleWest	297	+14	+4.7
GEC	608	+29	+4.8
Comline	262	+12	+4.6

FALLS:

Stock	Close	Chng	Chng%
s Hotels	139	-20	-14.4
Black Arrow	93	-12	-12.9
JLB Sports	388	-29	-7.5
REXAM	238	-15	-6.3
Glenmorange A	540	-32	-5.9

TEMPUS

Forward with new GEC

WHICH would you rather buy? A share in an Internet service provider or an Internet equipment maker? Judging by the price GEC is paying for Fore Systems of the US, there is almost as much capital growth hope in the latter as there is in the former. GEC is paying a 43 per cent premium to buy Fore — and this comes against a backdrop that saw Fore shares almost double in value over the past month as speculation mounted that it would become subject of a bid.

GEC is certainly paying an exorbitant price — the sales multiple is 6.6 times and the multiple to earnings for the year to March 1999 is 76 times. But this is the going rate. In reality, GEC has little choice but to pay up if it wants to play in the big league in a market that includes companies such as Northern Telecom and Ericsson. It has advertised itself as cash

rich and a keen buyer. In addition, vendors in its new areas of operation are few and can name their price. Lucent, GEC's main rival in its new-found guise as a telecoms equipment manufacturer, paid 13 times sales for Ascend, a similar company to Fore Systems. Shares in BATM Advanced Communications, discussed in more detail below, also trade at 80 odd times earnings.

For GEC's, and their investors', point of view, consolation comes because for an Internet-related story Fore's markets have a comforting connection with reality. Fore even generates a profit. That may be only \$55 million on \$632 million of sales, but Fore is growing at a spectacular rate. Sales were up 35 per cent last year. These are tangible products with tangible profit potential. Buy into equipment makers, not service providers. Buy new GEC.

BATM

BATM Advanced Communications is much like Fore, the US company bought yesterday by GEC, although it operates on a much smaller scale. BATM manufactures switching devices that shift information quickly and efficiently around the Internet.

BATM may also follow Fore into the hands of a bidder. Yesterday BATM admitted that "a multinational corporation" had agreed to take a 4.5 per cent stake in the company with the option of increasing this stake to 9.9 per cent in the future. The buyer is likely to be either Cisco or 3M, or even IBM, which supplies many of BATM's products alongside its own.

BATM, meanwhile, reported impressive annual results and the shares added 12 per cent to close at 585p to trade at an astonishing 82 times earnings.

Biotechs

THE biotechnology sector seems to have shrugged off the departure of Mungo Park from Nomura International. Mr Park established what was known as the biotech bottom-fishing book, or BBFB. The bank acquired large stakes in eight or nine companies, and is believed to have smaller holdings in many more. It pitted Nomura's judgment on smaller biotech shares against the market's.

The approach also produced some spectacular successes. Phytopharm, bought for less than 45p in late 1997, is now at 241p; Xenova, backed at 55p last autumn, is now at 106p. The fear is Mr Park's exit will turn Nomura from biotech bull to biotech bear. After all, cynics say, taking a 10 per cent stake in a weak company is an expensive and risky way of attracting corporate advisory business. Nomura insists, as it would, that it remains committed to

the emerging healthcare sector and that BBFB has the funds to take on short-sellers. Time will tell. But despite the fact that the market has taken Mr Park's departure in its stride, investors need to look at the smaller players with renewed caution.

Meanwhile, the bigger companies, where Nomura's influence is much less important, look increasingly solid. Celltech and Chiroscience show particular promise.

First Leisure

EGO-MASSAGING semantics aside, Cannons is acquiring the fitness business of First Leisure. First Leisure also says it continues to investigate "strategic initiatives" for its two other businesses: bars and nightclubs, and tennis and bowling.

Whilst this could mean that it hopes to enlarge these businesses through acquisitions, it is more likely that a full-scale break-up of First Leisure is now in the offing. And who would have thought that two years ago when Michael Grade, with an enviable track record at Channel 4 behind him, took the reins?

The subsequent exit from bingo and resorts looked sensible, taking the group out of mature businesses and giving it money to expand in more go-go areas. But a downturn in two of those three continuing divisions meant Mr Grade garnered little credit for what he achieved. The decision now to sell fitness, the fastest growing division, is odd — if the group retains the will to survive and thrive.

First Leisure shares, up 4p to 254p, have recovered from October's low of 160p, but are still short of the 436p reached a year ago. Shareholders should hang on for the denouement: yesterday's deal clearly puts First Leisure in play as a bid target if it is not broken up.

EDITED BY ROBERT COLE

COMMODITIES

LIFTS	Close	Chng	Chng%
COCOA			
May	587.60	Jul	535.83
Dec	715.73	Jul	656.82
Mar	737.28	Jul	677.88
Dec	756.78	Jul	697.88
Mar	787.87	Jul	727.88
Dec	817.87	Jul	757.88

ROBUSTA COFFEES	Close	Chng	Chng%
May	1438.145	Jul	1456.154
Dec	1438.145	Jul	1456.154
Mar	1438.145	Jul	1456.154
Dec	1438.145	Jul	1456.154
Mar	1438.145	Jul	1456.154

WHITE SUGAR (FOB)	Close	Chng	Chng%
May	183.01	Jul	183.01
Dec	171.87	Jul	171.87
Mar	172.72	Jul	172.72
Dec	174.02	Jul	174.02

MEAT & LIVESTOCK	Close	Chng	Chng%
COMMISSION			
May	10.35	Jul	10.35
Dec	10.35	Jul	10.35
Mar	10.35	Jul	10.35

ICEBERG (London 6.00pm)	Close	Chng	Chng%
CRUDE OILS (Brent FOB)			
May	15.55	Jul	15.55
Dec	15.55	Jul	15.55
Mar	15.55	Jul	15.55

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ICEBERG (London

ECONOMIC VIEW

ANATOLE KALETSKY

No surprise in better than expected performance

The predictions of the world's economic forecasters are confounded on a regular basis

If the world economy confounds conventional forecasts this year — and it usually does — the main surprise is likely to be on the side of better than expected performance. This is the clearest conclusion I drew from conversations with the many economic officials gathered in Washington this week for the meetings of the G7, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

In making this prediction, I realise that last week's official forecasts show global economic growth slowing to a feeble 2.5 per cent this year and then accelerating only modestly to 3.4 per cent in 2000.

I also recognise that Michael Mussa, the IMF's chief economist, has publicly stated that the risks to the forecast are still mostly on the downside. Mr Mussa believes that the US economy could slow more sharply than expected after its fourth consecutive year of rapid growth. In Europe, where the IMF predicts that growth will accelerate from 2 to 3 per cent, Mr Mussa admits dismally that "the basis for our forecast of stronger activity is not entirely clear". In Japan there is the very real possibility of an even deeper depression and in Asia and other emerging markets the hopes of recovery are still clouded by many doubts.

Why, then, do I feel fairly confident that the world economy will beat official forecasts?

One reason is simply mechanical. When economic trends turn around, computerised models almost always underestimate the strength of both recoveries and slumps. This is not just a statistical quirk; it reflects an important feature of the real-life behaviour of policymakers, as well as businessmen and consumers, which conventional forecasts tend to ignore. This behaviour can be summarised in the classic sequence of financial emotions that characterise the tops and bottoms of bull and bear markets — "skepticism, denial, capitulation".

As share prices rise towards the top of a bull market, investors are at first sceptical about the level of stock prices. As prices keep rising, the previously sceptical investors go into denial — simply refusing to believe that further gains are possible. Finally, when the sceptics capitulate, throw caution to the winds and start buying the shares they considered overpriced when they were much cheaper several months or years before. It is usually soon after this point that a change in the trend finally occurs and the bull market collapses.



Alan Greenspan, Chairman of the Federal Reserve, which remains optimistic on US growth

Exactly the same sequence tends to occur, albeit in less visible form, among central bankers and businessmen at the top and bottom of an economic cycle. The most important examples at present can be seen in the behaviour of the Federal Reserve Board and the European Central Bank.

Let us start with the ECB. Throughout last year the ECB and its predecessor, the Bundesbank, simply refused to take seriously the possibility of an economic downturn in Europe. When recession turned from possibility into reality last autumn, the ECB and the Bundesbank went into outright denial.

First the Bundesbank issued ludicrous comments suggesting that the global economic crisis would have less impact on Germany than on the US when all the statistics on trade and financial exposure pointed to the opposite conclusion. Then the ECB went even further, declaring that "EMU would make Europe an 'oasis of stability' in the very same week that Alan Greenspan, Chairman of US Federal Reserve, pointed out that not even the less-exposed American economy could hope to remain 'an oasis of prosperity' in such a turbulent world."

Earlier this month, however, the ECB seemed finally to make the transition from denial to capitulation. With its unexpected 0.5 per cent rate cut and the subsequent statements by Wim Duisenberg, President of the ECB, implying that he welcomed the weakening of the euro, the ECB effectively threw in the towel on its deflationary doctrine.

Mr Duisenberg and his colleagues continue to pay lip service to the dogma that monetary policy has nothing to do with unemployment, but actions speak louder than words. Nobody I talked to in Washington last week was in doubt about the ECB's new commitment to stimulating the European economy. The general view among the people who are familiar with the European central bankers could be summarised like this: when ECB officials say that they won't use monetary policy to manage the economic cycle, they may sound like fools; but don't worry, they are just bars. It seems reasonable to assume, therefore, that the ECB will keep easing monetary policy and the euro will keep falling (albeit with occasional corrections) until such time as the key European economies, including Germany, the structuralist weakest one, show clear signs of growth.

But because there are bound to be long lags between interest rate cuts and visible signs of recovery, the ECB is likely to keep cutting interest rates even after a modest economic recovery is already "baked in the cake". This suggests that ECB policy will be eased far enough to ensure a stronger than expected recovery in euro-land as a whole, if not perhaps in Germany.

In America, an opposite, but equally powerful, sequence of scepticism, denial and capitulation can be observed. The Fed was until last year extremely sceptical about Wall Street's belief that America was enjoying a "new paradigm" of rapid economic growth and low unemployment that carried no risk of inflation.

Last summer, as the statistical evidence in favour of a new paradigm mounted, the Russian crisis gave the Fed a convenient reason to deny the importance of the whole ques-

tion. Instead of worrying that excessive economic growth might lead to inflation, the Fed quite rightly switched its attention to the risk that financial turmoil would cause a slump.

But today, the Fed is being forced to shift its focus back to inflation and rapid growth. In doing so, the Fed seems to be capitulating in its struggle against the "new paradigm". Officials now seem to accept that the US economy really can grow strongly for years on end without risking inflation.

The greatest surprise in my trip to America has been to hear senior Fed officials speaking about the possibility that America's long-term trend growth rate may now be as high as 3 per cent, instead of the 2 to 2.5 per cent generally assumed even a year ago. Some also note that the present, apparently very low level of unemployment is actually very near the average in the 1950s and 1960s which was 4.6 per cent. If that level could be sustained in the postwar period without any serious inflationary problems, why should it not prove equally sustainable today?

I put this question another way, maybe there is no need for a new paradigm to explain America's excellent economic performance. Perhaps it is sufficient to posit the old paradigm of the 1950s and early 1960s: a pragmatic mix of free market industrial policies, competitive labour markets and sensible demand management operating in a flexible, entrepreneurial economy.

I have believed for several years that deregulated markets combined with a return to the Keynesian "old paradigm" of active demand management could explain much of the recent economic success in America (and also in Britain). To my surprise and delight, I found senior Fed officials talking in very similar terms.

It remains to be seen whether events justify the Fed's optimism (and mine) about America's capacity for rapid, non-inflationary growth. It may turn out that the Fed has already waited too long before raising interest rates. The bubble in technology stocks on Wall Street, the consumer spending spree and the upsurge in US business investment could soon turn into an unsustainable, and ultimately inflationary, boom.

In fact, if I were an American central banker I would start edging interest rates gently upwards now to restrain the enthusiasm a little. But the Fed seems less inclined than in the past to follow its traditional principle of "taking away the punchbowl just when the party is getting merry". Maybe the Fed is wrong to give the economy so much leeway; more probably it is right. But either way, there is one prediction that can be made with a fair degree of confidence: in America, even more than in Europe, the economic surprises this year are likely to be on the upside.



Old for new: the original motto of the CWS — buy in bulk and buy cheap — is key to the agreement

Moves to a merger may solve the Co-op conundrum

What is the difference between a Co-operative and a Co-op? If you don't know, don't worry — this is one of the main problems that the fragmented and largely anonymous Co-operative movement has to deal with.

Fraser Nelson examines how the CWS and CRS will gain from reforming their alliance

This is the issue which yesterday's quasi-merger between the Co-operative Wholesale Society (CWS) and Co-operative Retail Society (CRS) is aimed at clearing up.

The result is that the CRS, which trades as the "Co-operative", has pooled its buying power with the CWS, which sells goods labelled "Co-op".

In reforming an age-old alliance, they hope to recapture their buying power — and defend themselves from the best their capitalist counterparts have to throw at them.

Until fairly recently, the co-operative movement was quite straightforward. Almost all grocery shops traded under the distinctive "Co-op" logo, and issued stamps to shoppers who regularly queued for their "divi".

They set up the CWS, in 1863, to buy all the food. The idea was simple: buy in bulk; buy cheap to drive down prices; and let everyone share the profits.

As capitalists such as J Sainsbury expanded, the number of co-operative societies dwindled from a peak of 1,400 to 48 — each independent but sharing the same heritage and "not-for-profit" identity.

There are now two main camps. The first is dominated by the CWS, under Graham Melmoth — who two years ago saw off a hostile takeover approach from Andrew Regan, the 31-year-old financier.

As well as being Britain's largest farmer and largest funeral

manager, the CWS runs 560 of its own grocery shops. Its main task is to organise the "Co-operative Retail Trading Group" — a £3.5 billion food buying force which has steadily been joined by various other co-operative groceries.

CRS, which has 469 stores, has led the second faction and has been keen to steer clear of Mr Melmoth and his allies.

Until seven months ago, it bought its food from its own "refusenik" alliance: the Consortium of Independent Co-operatives (CIC) — which it formed with United Northwest and the Yorkshire Co-op.

Both companies badly need to reduce costs to improve their financial performance. In May last year the CRS reported that losses had doubled to £26 million from £13.5 million, partly because of a £155 million investment.

The CWS is in the black, but its interim profits slid to £16 million, from £20 million for the first six months of 1998. Mr Melmoth blamed this on the £7 million spent bringing back its "divi".

Much of the opposition to the CWS has been traced back to the era of Harry Moore, who resigned as CRS chief executive in October last year.

When the CIC alliance fell

apart in September, Mr Moore said that the CRS would rather go it alone than join Mr Melmoth and the CWS.

When Mr Moore retired, he was replaced by Andy Meeham, a former Sainsbury manager, drafted in to inject some capitalist-management styles into the CRS.

One of his first moves was to commission McKinsey, the management consultant, to come up with proposals for a shake-up. The results came yesterday. Mr Meeham has sold off its non-grocery businesses, comprising 46 department stores called "Living" and 10 Home-world stores. This raised £149 million.

Next, Mr Meeham has ended years of resistance and decided to join Mr Melmoth's alliance — and has created a buying machine with firepower of £4.5 billion a year.

The idea is exactly the same as the original motto of the CWS: buy in bulk; and buy cheap. If effect, it generates all the price advantages of a full merger — which many industry observers think will be the next step.

Clive Beddall, editor of *The Grocer*, said: "A merger is bound to happen one day, but it's been bound to happen for the last 20 years. They are just following the trend in the industry."

Mr Melmoth is aware of the continual danger. "The City machine — lawyers, advisers, bankers, the press — has a gargantuan appetite and it has to be fed," he said recently.

By ending years of rivalry with the CWS and returning to his society's co-operative roots, Mr Meeham is also determined that the CRS should also be kept from the jaws of the monster.

Peter out

SCANNING the speakers at tomorrow's Institute of Directors annual convention, I detect a politician-free zone. The headlines at last year's event were stolen by Peter Mandelson, who cunningly managed to be invited along even before he became Secretary of State for Trade and Industry.

"The members requested after last year's convention not to have a political speech," the IoD tells me. Instead, they get Michael Grade, Britain's former "pornographer-in-chief", and Sir Paul Condon of the Met Police, among others. So ends an

odd *rapprochement*, even for the Blair era.

Two years ago Tim Melville-Ross, Director-General at the IoD, was tempted into some unwise remarks about how awful a Labour government would be, a prospect that materialised soon afterwards.

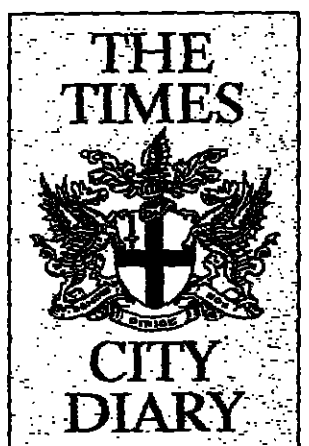
Mandy's visit was seen as cementing new Labour's relationship with all in the business world. But it seems they didn't want him back.

FURTHER on the Prince of Darkness (rtd), Mandelson's recent trip to South Africa to help the ANC's election cause was sponsored by the AEEU. The union has just settled the bill, and I understand that Ken Jackson, general secretary, had insisted that Mandy went economy class.

The reason? Payback time for Mandelson's well-publicised remarks to the Labour conference last year about "horny handed sons of toil".

Mother lode

A SHARP-EYED Australian financial journalist set off a chain of events that led to the first successful legal action ever against a Swiss bank for



the return of Holocaust victims' assets. The story is told by James Kirby in *My Mother's Diamonds*, about the struggle to make the Swiss admit to such accounts.

The Irish-born Kirby was banking correspondent of *The Australian* when he came across a small ad in 1995 placed by a suburban Australian lawyer seeking claimants to recover assets lost to Swiss banks. Australia has, proportionately, the world's largest community of Holocaust survivors outside Israel and stories he wrote for the paper brought hundreds of responses.

The book details the first settlement, by Swiss Bank Corporation with one of Henry Burstyn's clients. Publication was nearly prevented by a non-disclosure agreement signed by the lawyer, but

enough of the story had come out beforehand.

Other litigants were successfully silenced, however. "The banks got better at this sort of thing soon after," says Kirby.

DANGEROUS things, e-mails. Steve Berry, assistant vice-president at Greenwich NavWest, fired off an electronic whinge to *Life*, the futures market, about having to work over the May and August Bank Holidays because European exchanges are open.

Copies of his message are, inexplicably, doing the rounds of the ether with various rude comments attached. "So now we are marching to the tune of the German Exchange," Berry rants. "Am I suddenly a European instead of British? Must I put my watch forward another hour?"

Berry is refusing to comment on what he says is personal correspondence, but a colleague says: "He's terribly upset about it all."

Photo call

LAST week Howard Stringer, chairman of Sony's American business, was barely known outside the TV world. He was then "outed" as one of the potential candidates to run the BBC. (He won't get it: the BBC governors are far too timid to appoint an American.) I have just been invited to

photograph him today at his old school, Oundle, where he will address pupils on "The Spirit of Enterprise".

I immediately assumed that Stringer, who has bought a cottage in the Cotswolds and not ruled himself out for the BBC job, had started the publicity mills working.

Not at all. He doesn't know the cameras will be there. Someone at Oundle spotted that their old boy was newsworthy, according to the school's communications officer, Megan Smedley, who also teaches English. O brave new world, where schools have communications officers.

MARTIN WALLER

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Howard Stringer is to address pupils at his former school, Oundle

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Too many blips on the screen

Despite a starry cast and director, *Pushing Tin* has not set America alight. Giles Whittell reports

When the director of *Four Weddings and a Funeral* makes a comedy thriller about air traffic controllers, you have to ask why. What made Mike Newell think the singularly specialised profession of aerial orienteering was his sort of material? The short answer is that the *New York Times Magazine* ran a story on air traffic controllers in 1996 that caught his eye. The longer one must be that he thought he could heat up some compelling human drama in the pressure cooker of a windowless room filled with radar screens.

Well, he hasn't. *Pushing Tin* is a film that lures you in with the promise of slick New York laughs and slabs of jargon-laden dialogue (which is, to be sure, one of the great unacknowledged crowd-pullers: just ask Tom Stoppard), only to leave you lollygagging in Long Island at two moderately interesting couples being unfaithful to each other.

Pushing Tin — the phrase refers to the business of moving planes around the sky — is also a gift to film critics fond of clumsy metaphors. It's "a lively flight for most of the way", said *Variety*, generously. *People* magazine decided it "fails to stay aloft". The *Chicago Sun Times* likened it to "an overloaded airplane struggling to lift off", and the *Los Angeles Times* called it a "near miss".

To be fair, for its first half-hour it soars. Giant metal tubes with fuel-laden wings do their dangerous ballet over the world's most dramatic cluster of skyscrapers as knowing voiceovers speak rapidly of knots, altitude and sharp left



turns. Indoors, little diamonds of light move jerkily across expensive-looking "scopes" and flash red when they get too close to each other.

This is New York's air traffic control centre which, thanks to Kennedy, Newark and La Guardia airports, apparently handles "more planes, closer together, than anywhere else on earth". West Drayton may disagree, but when we hear that each controller is "responsible for more lives in a single shift than a surgeon in his entire life", we dare not quibble. The sensation is not unlike watching *ER*: we are under the spell of competence, and this makes it unnerving that the controllers themselves are so close to being bonkers. Only one of them is female, and she's a body-builder, while the sanest of the men is insanely competitive.

Meet Nick "the Zone" Falzone, played by John Cusack. He can line up half-a-dozen incoming jumbos while serenading his colleagues in a dulcet baritone, and still leave time for private banter with each pilot. Lines like "Welcome to my sky, my favourite redneck" are his idea of *chumminess*.

Falzone starts out happily married to Cate Blanchett who, as a Long Island house-



John Cusack as Nick "the Zone" Falzone, air traffic controller *par excellence* and hero of Mike Newell's unsatisfying examination of the world of radar and near misses, *Pushing Tin*

wife with a flawless Italian-American accent, is so unrecognisable from Elizabeth that she must be the real thing — a film star who can act. Then Russell Bell (Billy Bob Thorn-

ton) strides in from Arizona, where he had a reputation as the best controller in the West and liked to lie down under landing "heavies" to feel the effects of weight turbulence. The turbulence sent Bell cartwheeling across the runway, and he has a video to prove it. His 19-year-old wife, played by Angelina Jolie, has a similar effect on Falzone's marriage when she allows him to seduce her after he finds her in tears in a supermarket over a dead fuchsia hybrid.

With this film Thornton joins Gene Hackman and Robert Duvall in the pantheon of great scene-stealers. Asked if

he enjoys sports, for instance, he says he "used to bowl" when he was an alcoholic, and makes it sound as if he liked stealing babies too. Meanwhile, Jolie — who is Jon Voigt's daughter — looks convincingly lost in New York, and Cusack effortlessly carries the affair along, insofar as it goes anywhere.

Here lies the problem. The dialogue is sharp and sounds authentic, as it should when written by Glen and Les Charles, two of the creators of *Cheers*. But once the Zone has slept with Mrs Bell there is, apart from the inevitable re-

criminations and an insulting contrived bomb scare, no plot. It's as if Newell is scared of lingering on the nerdy niceties of air traffic control, which in fact are the most intriguing aspect of the film. Most people fly, after all, and most want to land in one piece. True, air traffic controllers are not astronauts, and there are limits to the intrinsic glamour of a crew of tense arithmeticians in a darkened bunker. This is why, as *Pushing Tin* unfolds, one often wishes one of the swagging maesters of action were doing the unfolding. "There's an aluminium shower in that guy's future," Falzone says of Bell, meaning

he's a loose cannon who could cause a mid-air collision. So where's the collision? Or at least the full-blown near miss or, at the very least, a suicide or nervous breakdown, since we're told air traffic controllers have so many of these? If this were a *Jerry (Top Gun)* Bruckheimer film, we'd have all three, and a villain trying to mess with the radar to boot. Instead we end up with not one but two controllers cartwheeling in the wreckage of a 747 in search of themselves. *Pushing Tin* did not light up the box office at the weekend and *Election* fared even worse, despite some of the best

reviews of any film in recent months. This mordant satire on contemporary American high school life boasts a career-making performance by Reese Witherspoon as a sickeningly ambitious know-all, and a career-saving turn by Matthew Broderick (hopeless in *Godzilla* last year) as her well-meaning teacher. It was not in the weekend's Top Ten films — possibly because it leaves an unintentionally bleak impression in the wake of the Columbine school shootings. Then again, *The Matrix* is one of the films accused of inspiring the school gunmen, and in its fourth week it's back at No 1.

US WEEKEND BOX-OFFICE TAKINGS AND ANALYSIS

1	(2) <i>The Matrix</i> (Warner Bros)	\$12.9m/\$99m
2	(1) <i>Life</i> (Universal)	\$11.6m/\$20.4m
3	(3) <i>Never Been Kissed</i> (Twentieth Century Fox)	\$6.2m/\$22.9m
4	(4) <i>Pushing Tin</i> (Twentieth Century Fox)	\$3.6m
5	(5) <i>Analogue Yoda</i> (Warner Bros)	\$3.2m/\$91.1m
6	(6) <i>Lead & Follow</i> (Warner Bros)	\$3.1m
7	(7) <i>10 Things I Hate About You</i> (Touchstone)	\$2.8m/\$25.1m
8	(8) <i>The Out-of-Body Experience</i> (Paramount)	\$2.7m/\$20.5m
9	(9) <i>Go</i> (Columbia)	\$2.7m/\$9.4m
10	(10) <i>Forces of Nature</i> (DreamWorks)	\$1.7m/\$45.8m

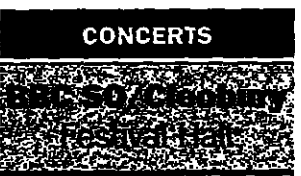
1. First amount is estimated weekend takings, April 23-25. Second amount is total takings to April 19. Figure in brackets indicates last week's position

● Bullish folk at Warner Bros are predicting that *The Matrix* will end up with around \$160 million in American box-office takings. The cyber-space thriller with Keanu Reeves returned to the top of the table at the weekend, ousting Eddie Murphy's prison drama *Life* after just one week.

Where gran left off

The pernickety might question the inclusion of world premieres in the BBC's *Endless Parade* series dedicated to "Classics of British Music since 1945". Yet here on Saturday was *The Sultan's Turban*, a Post-Modernist bon-bon from David Bedford, lined up against the heavy brigade: Tippett, Britten, Walton. Classic or not, Bedford's BBC commission proved the perfect concert opener. The conductor Nicholas Cleobury strode to the rostrum. To a background drone from the lower strings, the BBC Symphony Orchestra's violins sprang up with arpeggios. The notes fragmented with tinkling percussion and woodwind bird pecks; then the brass threw a fit. The pattern was repeated once, twice, thrice, the texture steadily filling out.

So what was this, a routine flexing of Minimalist muscles? More than that. Sunlight was hitting the Sultan's turban, as described in the *Rubaiyat* of Omar Khayyam and set to music by Bedford's grandmother Liza Lehmann in her song cycle *In a Persian Garden* (a big



hit with late Victorians). The arpeggios were lifted from that source, though successive elements in this rhapsody for the millennium's dawn came from Bedford's more recent past. Aside from Minimalism, 1970s symphonic rock wafted up, as did New Romanticism. It was all very pleasant and toe-tapping, certainly more than the new millennium promises to be.

Britain's musical establishment then took over. If any of Tippett's works is an "endless parade", it must be the *Triple Concerto* of 1978-79. Strands of knotty string lyricism, brass chunterings and the becalmed shimmerings inspired by gamelans merge and separate into infinity. Pools of boredom result. So do problems of balance. Radio listeners might have had the best of it on stage, Paul Watkins's impassioned cello edged out his col-

leagues in the Enesco Trio, Elizabeth Layton (violin) and Jane Atkins (viola).

Still, there are moments in the Tippett beautiful enough to stop the heart, as there are in Britten's dramatic cantata *Phaedra*, his last vocal work, compact and urgent. "Fool, I love you" sang the mezzo-soprano Louise Winter, swaying in purple. But *Phaedra* was the fool, falling for her stepson Hippolytus, and Winter pounced eloquently on the abrupt anguish in Britten's setting of Racine's lines.

Feelings ran higher still in Walton's *Second Symphony*, once neglected, now clearly seen as his punchiest postwar achievement. Here Cleobury and the BBC SO were at their best — rhythms crisp, tension firm, lyric stretches steeped in melancholy. True, the finale still collapsed at the end, but that was more Walton's problem than theirs.

GEOFF BROWN

I wine to say it, but Yo Yo Ma has his ups and downs. He is both an aristocrat of the cello and its irrepressible *enfant terrible*. It is to his eternal credit that he has escaped the endless round of Elgars and Dvoraks that make up the career of most world-class cellists, to explore other traditions: his yo-yo, his forays into the film world and the Baroque cello. But this latter enterprise has not always been a success.

There is more to playing a gut-strung cello with a Baroque bow than getting the equipment right. Cellists like Anner Byssner and Pieter Wisselwey have spent years perfecting the art, while Steven Isserlis, brought up on gut strings, has an instinct for tone production that still eludes Ma.

His chief problem lies in his inability to let the sound ring free, the very essence of this playing style. The aptly named Margaret Faultless, leader of Amsterdam Baroque, and its principal cellist Jonathan Manson, showed him up all too clearly in an arrangement of *Erharte dich*.

Out of place in Baroque world



His tight vibrato, squeezed sound and wayward intonation contrasted starkly with the open glow of their tone and wonderful fluidity of line. A tendency to play sharp, particularly in an embarrassing *Air on a G-string*, suggested that he finds the lower Baroque pitch a problem.

Performance aside, Koopman's chorale arrangements were ill-conceived: a high cello sound cannot project through the orchestral texture as the voice or a non-string instrument can. One felt that we were watching the equivalent of Ma humming along to a tune in the bath: his enjoyment palpable, but the solemn chorales diminished.

The Boccherini *Concerto in G* came as a relief: intonation was still varied, but at least we were hearing a cellist in music scored to make him shine. Ma lent his animal spirits to Boccherini's buoyant invention, and there were glimpses of

what he might do were he to tame this cello, particularly in a beautifully limpid descending scale at the end of the *Adagio* and some dazzling passage-work in the finale. But an encore movement was, again, ex-cruciating despite the enthusiasm of an audience of fans, some of whom walked out after the concerto.

They missed an enchanting and witty performance of Mozart's *Symphony No 29* from the Amsterdam Baroque, rare visitors to London, and the

real stars of the night. Ton Koopman's fiery energy also made Rameau's *Dardanus* or chestnut suite crackle. The explosive "bruits de guerre" sizzled, while the comical Tambourin was accompanied by two bows clattering on the bass strings. The soft, true note of a wooden flute calling into the silence in the *Chaconne*, and the beguiling violin solo which closes it, were high points.

HELEN WALLACE

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VIVALDI'S GLORIA
Reviewed by Lucie Skeaping

For those taking in Venice on the Grand Tour in the early 18th century, there was one part of the itinerary that simply could not be missed — a visit to the Ospedale della Pietà, one of the city's four institutions for orphaned, illegitimate or abandoned girls. Every Sunday and Feast Day its great doors would be thrown open to the public for concerts given by the inmates — and Vivaldi wrote this grand-scale setting of part of the Catholic Mass for them. These days, the work is so popular it has almost become his "Fifth Season".

Collegium Musicum 90 under Richard Hickox has bagged two of the best sopranos for this sort of thing — Emma Kirkby and Tessa Bonner, whose close-harmony cooing in the duet *Laudamus* is quite delicious. The choruses are bright and appealing, although the string playing sometimes felt a little routine. I preferred The Sixteen's performance overall — lots of contrast, beautifully phrased and some thoughtful continuo accompaniments — and their alto soloist is wonderfully plummy. I enjoyed Nikolaus Harmoncourt's *Concentus Musicus* Wien with the Arnold Schoenberg Choir too, particularly their energetic opening *Gloria* and the beautifully played reedy oboe solo in the *Domine deus*.

If you like your Vivaldi big and buxom you could go for the New Philharmonia Chorus and Orchestra, under Riccardo Muti, with the full-bodied operatic voices of Teresa Berganza and Lucia Valentini-Terrani, although the balance at times makes the chorus sound strangely far away. The Choir of King's College, Cambridge, under David Willocks, also gives a moving and confident performance. Mind you, appealing though they are, there is a certain irony in using boys' voices in this work, one of the few examples of sacred Baroque music written specially for girls.

With this in mind my favourite performance, then, is the one given by the Taverner Choir and Players, directed by Andrew Parrott (Virgin Classics VC 7 5932-2 CD, only available through EMI's Special Import Service £15.99). They daringly dispense with male voices altogether, simply singing the tenor and bass parts up the octave, as might well have been done in Vivaldi's time.

The effect is quite startling. Warm, sensitive and full of spirit, they really do sound like "a choir of angels" — very exciting and very Vivaldi.

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CHANGING TIMES

THEATRE

Aphra Behn staged...

Oroonoko flows again

THEATRE: Jeremy Kingston meets the writer who has adapted Aphra Behn's 17th-century novel for the RSC

Time was when voices of discontent were raised when ever black actors were given leading roles in productions of Shakespeare (*Othello* excepted) or other Jacobean or Restoration dramatists. Pedants (and I was one) pointed out that Macbeth's court was all white, and that if Prospero was white and Miranda black some questions should have been asked of Mrs Prospero. Oh, big joke.



'Aphra Behn's book provides the earliest popular account of the slave trade'

The pedants were ignored. Black actors played ever more demanding roles, and in the larger outfits, the Royal Shakespeare Company and the National, they remained with the company for months or years at a time. The importance of this is now obvious. While valuable work is done by all-black companies, actors who spend their working lives in them forfeit the experience of working on the classics with resident teachers and older actors and thus miss the chance of observing the styles, the tricks, the disciplines and all the rest of the procedures that go by the name of "theatrical tradition".

It is because the RSC has been at the forefront of what is awkwardly called colour-blind casting that

from tomorrow it is able to stage a new version of Aphra Behn's novel *Oroonoko* in Stratford. Published in 1688, the year before Behn's death at the age of about 48 (most events in her early life are far from certain), the book tells of a West African prince sold into slavery and transported to Surinam, at that time ruled by the English. Here his noble character impresses all who encounter him, including Behn herself, who follows the custom of novelists of the time in claiming that hers is an eyewitness account. After sundry adventures he leads a slave revolt, is captured by trickery and killed.

The book is an astonishing work for its period, holding up both the native Americans and the African slaves to admiration, exposing Christian hypocrisy and providing the earliest popular account of the slave trade.

A stage adaptation by her friend Thomas Southerne followed soon after her death, and a better one by David Garrick 50 years later, in both of which the black roles were of course taken by white actors.

These versions dealt only with Oroonoko's life in Surinam and ignored the account he gives of his



Nigerian-born playwright and novelist Biyi Bandele: "I'd not read Aphra Behn's book before and I was impressed by the sheer human vision this woman had"

previous life in a part of Africa that Behn calls Coromantien. So when the RSC director Greg Doran pointed out that the company now had a body of black actors with the ability to present a more authentic production, the decision was also made to restore these unused passages from the original text. The writer commissioned to make the new adaptation was the Nigerian-born playwright and novelist, Biyi Bandele.

We meet backstage at the Barbican. He has lived in Britain for much of the 1990s, having arrived here from Lagos with a British

Council grant and the play *Marching For Fausa* that would later be produced at the Royal Court. His adaptation of Chinua Achebe's novel *Things Fall Apart* has just been revived at Manchester's Library Theatre; he is working on a script for the performance arts company Told By An Idiot. Picador is publishing *The Street*, his latest novel, and *Oroonoko* is in rehearsal. Astonishingly, he is looking entirely calm.

"I'd not read the book before and I was impressed by the sheer human vision that this woman had.

At no point is she patronising about Oroonoko. But it took me a long time to find the stage language for it. Southerne managed to turn it into something like a Restoration comedy. David Garrick went to the other extreme and became very earnest. Then one morning I woke up and knew I had to do it in poetry."

His solution was bound up with the decision to resituate the African half of the play in Yorubaland (Bandele is a Yoruba). "I think Aphra Behn's Coromantien, which is in modern Ghana, is purely notional because all the characters' names

are recognisably Yoruba. I have invented almost everything that is said, though I have been faithful to the plot of her story. But I wrote it in poetry because I imagined the conversations happening in Yoruba, a highly rhetorical language. I felt that the best way to capture the poetry when translating it into English was to keep it as poetry."

"Nobody knows how Aphra Behn got hold of the story, but even if it had an historical reality it's more interesting to look at it as mythology. Because then it becomes clearer. Myths are more interesting

than history because where history is prose, myth is poetry, and poetry sometimes illuminates with very simple images. You have a kind of distillation of reality."

And so at the Other Place this week all the characters, black and white, prince, slave and plantation owner, will speak a heightened form of English. Behn herself wrote poetry. Biyi Bandele and the RSC are allowing her humane, poetic voice a hearing in the theatre once again.

● *Oroonoko* opens at the Other Place, Stratford (01789 295623) tomorrow

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CHANGING TIMES

Dance to this Spandau ballet

I took the American playwright Don Hood 12 years to research his new play about the relationship between Rudolf Hess and his guard through his last two decades in Spandau Prison. They were years well spent.

Receiving its world premiere at the New End Theatre, this is a sparely written, tautly constructed and quietly devastating piece. Hess was the deputy Führer of Germany until 1941, when he inadvertently bailed out of the war after his secret mission to broker a peace deal with British appeasers was discovered by Hitler. He was subsequently sentenced to life imprisonment at Nuremberg. For two decades

The Duck and the Nightingale
Hampstead

until his death, apparently by suicide, in 1987, this increasingly frail old ogre was notoriously Spandau's only inmate.

On the back of these much-exhumed bones, Hood fleshes out a complex and disquieting portrait of a deluded but compelling man. With almost no contact with the outside world, Hood's defiantly unrepentant Hess dreams of escaping to lead a Fourth Reich. He goes to sleep, he salutes. He addresses his beloved Hitler.

He should be wholly unpitiable, but Hood issues us with a challenge: is it possible to sympathise with someone who is beyond redemption? The answer — all the more arresting because so reluctantly arrived at — is yes. It is not just that Hood does not shrink from portraying Hess's penetrating intellect and perverted charm. It is that you have to admire his strength of spirit. At the start, he cleaves, fruitfully enough, to his sense of self-importance by playing non-stop mind-games on his captors. But when his put-on paranoia, madness and illness become the real thing, and when he gives up the fight, it is perversely moving.

Supporting this portrait is Hess's American guard Captain David Morgan, himself destined to remain at Spandau until Hess dies. Much of the play dramatises their first encounters in 1966. Prisoner and guard circle each other; Hess invariably prevails. Later, the years breed an uneasy equality. Nigel D. Hoyle is very good as Morgan, but Leonard Preston gives a quite electrifying performance as Hess. Its only faults are a snarling, spitting caricature of Hitler and the physical limitations of this tiny space. Otherwise, this is acted, staged and scripted with uncommon intelligence.

NIGEL CLIFF

Lorca takes flight

OPERA

The Nightingale's to Blame
Grand, Leeds

Simon Holt's first opera, premiered last November at the Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, has now reached Opera North who co-commissioned it, and in the framework of a proscenium theatre, this *Nightingale* has found a little more room to spread its wings.

This is Holt's act of homage to his beloved Lorca. In the poet's centenary year. Fashioned from *The Love of Don Perlimpin for Belise in the Garden*, it is a true *flavola* in musical, a fable of the elderly husband who has to learn about the delights of the body, while his new and voluptuous young wife must find the soul.

Just as Lorca's aphoristic play lives by parody — of character, of honour, of love — so Holt's score seems to be parodying almost every convention of Modernist musical language, even opera itself. And the extreme leaps and wild melismas of the vocal writing,

close tuned to the pungent palette of the 17 instrumentalists, also seems to me a canny recreation in sound of Lorca's verbal fusion of the lyrical and the grotesque. Perhaps the piece is working more cogently as drama now that it is run in: for I find myself liking it better than Rodney Milnes did at the Huddersfield premiere.

Certainly the music's slow uniformity of pace can be trying at times. It is not insignificant that Holt's *lourde de force* occur in the moments of stasis: the tableau of the Don singing alone at night; the tiny instrumental ensembles; the elfin dance of the "Duende" spirits (Thora Einarsson and Amanda Boyd making welcome Opera North debuts). But even this sense of music struggling through time seemed to me expressive of the frustration and the impotence felt by each character.

Against Neil Irish's exquisitely lit sets — architectural cardboard cut-outs of Lorca line-drawings, weeping moon and all — Donald Maxwell as the Don droops and stutters through his fierce lines. Patricia Rozario exercises the entire range of her soprano in the yearning sensuality of her florid writing: Fiona Kimm scolds eloquently as the servant Marcolfa; and Frances McCafferty enjoys the rattle of her rapid, nagging repetitions. Miraculously, scarcely a word is lost. Martin Duncan's deft production moves on to York, with Richard Farnes conducting with no less legardmain.

HILARY FINCH

Spanish lessons in life

Domingo in Zarzuela
Barbican

P lácido Domingo set out on Sunday to prove, with a handful of Spanish colleagues and the Covent Garden orchestra, that zarzuela is not just a secret of Iberia. His parents both specialised in this form of operetta, so in part it was an act of remembrance of the songs they taught him. Only once did he have recourse to a score.

Zarzuela is often crudely referred to as Spain's answer to Gilbert and Sullivan. Domingo soon put the lie to that. The arias and duets chosen were mainly meaty slices of spurned or unrequited love, with the influence of Cilea and Mascagni audible just across the Mediterranean. Only one item, by Suotullo and Carbonelli, suggested the kind of music Lehár was composing in Vienna in the 1920s, when the zarzuela was at its height.

Everything came easily to Domingo, some might argue too easily. He was in burlesque voice, with the baritone qualities which have been

there since the earliest days on full display. Here was Cavardossi rekindled, not Nanki-Poo, as he provided the Barbican stage. All of which, Domingo made clear, showed that some of us in Central London knew roughly as much about zarzuela as they do of G & S in Plazatoro.

He had an outstanding partner in Ainhoa Arrieta, a soprano who has been making a considerable name for herself in America. She has the haughty stance of a flamenco dancer and is not averse to a swing of the hips. The voice has a shimmering top to it and plenty of weight in the middle: a natural Musetta, a role she is shortly to sing at the Met. She started impressively with an aria by Curidi, and never looked back. Covent Garden, it is to be hoped, had its contracts at the stage door.

The mezzo, Cecilia Diaz, also making a company debut, took longer to warm up. She improved hugely as the evening moved on, using the smoky tones of the best Spanish mezzos in a soulful number by Chapi declaring eternal love. Miguel Roa was the dapper, energetic conductor. The ROH orchestra was on its mettle in generally unfamiliar music and Rosa egged them on their way, notably in three flashy overtures which showed that the zarzuela composers knew how to get their audience excited before the curtain went up. A generous helping of encores rounded off an exotic evening.

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LAW

THE WOOLF REFORMS

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The revolution in litigation starts here

Fast-track customer-friendly justice is upon us, says Lord Woolf. Interview by Frances Gibb

A revolution takes place in the civil justice system this week. Out goes our traditional costly drawn-out system of litigation with lawyers indulging in trial by combat — a system epitomised in *Bleak House's* Jarndyce v Jarndyce. In comes a speedy, cost-sensitive system in which judges — not lawyers — set the pace of litigation and people are encouraged with financial incentives to settle before trial.

Lord Woolf, Master of the rolls and architect of the reforms, accepts that it may mean a rougher, readier justice, but for many more people. "For the simpler cases not involving large sums of money it will be a more robust system of justice," he says. "It's all right having a Rolls-Royce. It is worth using only for journeys for which it's suitable. Many cases need a bike."

For the consumer, the reforms should mean certainty about what they are in for if they pursue or defend a claim. Iain Golden, QC, barrister and visiting professor at Nottingham Law School, told a seminar last week led by Richards Butler, the law firm that the present system is like asking the cost of a train ticket from Edinburgh to King's Cross. "The woman behind the counter will say: 'I haven't the slightest idea.' You will reply: 'Why not, I am only going to King's Cross?' And she will say: 'Well, that's what you say, but we're not necessarily going to King's Cross. We might be going to Inverness, Dundee... we'd probably end up in Exeter... we might never arrive!'"

"Quite extraordinary that we have run this system for so long without question." As well as uncertainty, there can be disproportionate cost. Roger Parker, Richards Butler's head of litigation, cites a case which came to court four years after proceedings were issued. A sum of £3 million was at stake. After a 12-week trial, the case was settled, with costs of £2 million each. Mr Parker says: "Woolf will help to create a climate where you don't go into those cases unless you've tried to explore whether there's a way out." Andrew Hearn, head of litigation at Timms Sainer Dechert, adds that people will not be allowed to run up huge costs over

small sums. "The concept of proportionality is revolutionary and very exciting: it allows the court to treat each case as it thinks fit."

From this week, judges become trial managers, setting timetables for cases and imposing cost penalties for delay. They can summarily dismiss weak claims and order the parties to try mediation. Woe be to a lawyer, Mr Hearn says, who sits back and waits for his next deadline. He or she will face hefty costs.

Lawyers are understandably nervous about what is a complete culture change. Some claim that the preparation time has been inadequate; that the changes will just shift the costs of litigation to its early stages; or that injustices will occur from excessively proactive and speedy judges. But most think that the reforms will benefit the customer. Barry Warne, of Irwin Mitchell, the Sheffield law firm, cites a case of a building society which sought to repossess a woman's home. It took the woman, Hazel Archer, ten years to defeat them and what started as a £20,000 claim against her ended with a legal bill for the society and her former lawyers, taken with the loss of the original loan, of £300,000. "Under Woolf," he says, "this case would have been settled or mediated, with huge time and cost savings."

Crucial to the reforms' success are the judges. Are they ready for their new role? They have undergone special training. But one deputy High Court judge recently told a litigator that the reforms "do not really change very much". The hope is that his view is a minority one. Lord Woolf points out that in the commercial court, judges are already leading the way, managing cases and encouraging parties to use other methods to settle disputes.

There is also concern about over-eager judges. Lawyers expect them to come down hard from the start, but Lord Woolf says the case will be flexible. Their new wide powers will make them liable to scrutiny and challenge. But Lord Woolf argues that all rulings will be subject to appeal. The Access to Justice Bill will also devolve many appeals on procedural points to lower courts, speeding up the appeals process: there will be a special Court of



Lord Woolf: "If the law gives a person a right, the law should be able to enforce that right"

Appeal fast track for procedural points; and the court will issue regular guidance.

Not all the reforms will be in place from day one. The computer back-up for judges, enabling them to manage cases on their laptops and with direct links with the court system, will not be there until next year at best. As a result, Lord Woolf says, the economies will not be made, and extra administrative staff have to be provided. But he is content, if not happy, that the technology should not be rushed. Secondly, the cap on legal fees chargeable in the fast track (which hears disputes of up to £15,000) will apply only to the trial itself, where a cap of £750 has been set for the three-hour hearings. The Lord Chancellor, Lord Irvine of Lairg, is to consult on whether pre-trial costs should also be capped. The

limited cap will bring more certainty, but it is, Lord Woolf says, "half a cake rather than the whole".

The reforms are meant to make litigation easier. "The philosophy I have adopted," Lord Woolf argues, "is that if the law gives a person a right, it is only proper that the law should be able to enforce that right." But paradoxically, the upshot should be fewer trials. With hefty penalties for those who stall or unreasonably refuse to settle, people will have to settle earlier.

"We will see many disputes sorted out without the courts being bothered," he says. "It is a huge change. It really is the end of the majestic, expensive, disproportionate unequal system we have been living with for too long."

Lawpage@the-times.co.uk

How my small claim left me with a big bill

For minor disputes to be solved without lawyers, the procedure must be made simpler

From this week it should be easier and cheaper for people to use the courts. But the Woolf reforms are also aimed at encouraging people to sort out simple disputes without using lawyers at all. The idea is that more people should use the small claims court, which will now be able to hear claims of up to £5,000. Litigants will have to represent themselves because legal aid is not normally available for such cases.

In January 1996 the limit on small claims disputes was raised from £1,000 to £3,000. It is a measure of the Government's confidence in this route to justice that the limit is being raised by a further £2,000. Doubts, however, have been raised over the scheme's effectiveness. Government research has found that while some litigants benefit, others struggle with the complexity of the law and arrive at court poorly prepared. Many have had difficulty in enforcing judgments once obtained.

My own recent experience with the small claims court suggests that the courts, judges and solicitors have yet to embrace the culture change needed to make the process user-friendly. In my case, I decided to bring a small claim as a litigant-in-person without a legal qualification.

My claim was for £1,200 worth of damage caused to my car by a negligent driver, who, fortunately, had insurance. The insurance company's claims handlers did not contest liability, but they made me an offer that I considered too low. I went to my local county court, which accepted my claim against the insurance company without comment, along with a fee of £80.

I looked forward to putting my case at an informal hearing before a district judge. That was my first mistake. It turned out that I should not have sued the insurance company, but the driver. This is a mere technicality, because in any case the insurer has to be sent a copy of the summons, and his solicitors take responsibility for dealing with it.

Instead of simply pointing this out to me, the solicitors served a "defence" to my claim, accusing me of being "trivious" and of "abuse of process". They also applied to the court for the

cost of drafting the defence. I needed legal advice. Acting on it, I discontinued the case and issued fresh proceedings, this time against the driver.

Surely, I thought, at the forthcoming costs hearing the judge would accept my argument that the solicitors' defence, though powerful, was pointless since I could never have succeeded in suing their client. Instead, I would argue, the solicitors should have written to tell me that I was pursuing a hopeless case. After all, having seen the details of my claim, they could have been in no doubt of what I was trying to do, and, as solicitors for the insurers, they had to deal with the claim anyway. Confident that the judge would right this wrong, I rejected an offer from the solicitors to settle the costs bill for £55 and gave notice that I would defend the application in person.

That was my second mistake. By the time of the costs hearing, the solicitors' bill had inflated to £465. At the hearing, the judge had little sympathy for a misguided layperson. "Of course," the judge concluded, "the solicitors had a right to issue a defence on behalf of their client." When I protested, he said: "Litigants name the wrong defendant at their peril." Though my spirits were lifted when the judge described the solicitors' claim for 90 minutes of barrister's time as "absurd", by the end of the hearing I found myself owing the insurance company £180.88 and the merits of my claim for damages had not even been heard.

Still reeling from this unhappy experience, I suggest three reforms consistent with the new legal climate that the Woolf reforms seek to engender. First, claims issued by litigants-in-person should be assessed for technical accuracy when they are deposited with court officials. Secondly, solicitors should be obliged to consider the interests of a litigant-in-person before seeking shelter behind technicalities and clocking up fee-earner time. Thirdly, judges should show greater imagination in protecting the interests of litigants-in-person. As Lord Woolf said: "The court has got to take on responsibility, clearly as part of its duties, to lend help to the litigant who needs it."



DAN BINDMAN

It really is the end of the old expensive, unequal system'

Legal DIARY

WAR finally broke out this week between the Lord Chancellor and the Law Society over legal aid cuts after months of niceties. With MPs due this week to debate the Access to Justice Bill, Lord Irvine of Lairg erupted over the society's advertising campaign — to highlight vulnerable groups it says will be hit by the cuts.

Yesterday the society hit back. Lord Irvine was wrong, it said, to accuse it of "not telling the truth". The society called for guarantees in the Bill to protect vulnerable groups. A senior Law Society official said: "We have him on the run." Lord Irvine told Radio 4 that the society would be better off improving the appalling delays in its complaints system.

Jan Hislop, the Editor of *Private Eye*, will be stepping into the lion's den later this year. He is to appear at the Law Society annual conference in Paris this October. Not known for his love of lawyers, Mr Hislop has been persuaded by the conference's organiser, Mark Stephens of Stephens Innocent, to appear with

Geoffrey Robertson, QC, and Peter Carter-Ruck in a session on media law.

More than half the UK's law students (57 per cent) think their ethnic origin will affect their careers, says a survey by *Lex*, the law students' magazine. Thirty-seven per cent also think that women are discriminated against in law firms and 58 per cent believe that is also true of the Bar.

Cabrin Griffiths, the Editor of *Lex*, says: "This shows that the profession has a long way to go before it shakes off its reactionary, negative image. Otherwise it will continue to lose first-rate law students to other careers, such as the City."

It is Sir Richard Scott, Lord Woolf's colleague, who has to make the civil justice reforms work. His comments are blunt on the lack of computer technology, he says in this month's *Counsel* magazine that it is a "major regret" that judges won't have the full IT they need. But judges, he acknowledges, are ready for the change. As for everyone else, he

ventures: "I trust there are none still wandering around the saddling enclosure."

Top moves: John Higham, QC, a leading insolvency silk, is joining the City law firm Stephenson Harwood to develop its in-house advisory services. And Michael Napier, senior partner of Irwin Mitchell, is to stand again for office at the Law Society. He will go for deputy vice-president after a narrow defeat last year in the fight for President.

No surprise that the Chancery judges are first off the mark with a new guide on the Woolf rules and how to manage cases, edited by Mrs Justice Arden. From district registries and the Chancery Division website: www.courtserve.gov.uk/high-home.htm

The abstract artist Kandinsky, some of whose works are on show at the Royal Academy until July 4, was also a lawyer-academic specialising in employment law. But after seeing an Impressionist exhibition, he abandoned law to train as an artist.

Law kept its hold on him, however, and he always painted in a suit.



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Vivienne Duffy with her children receiving her late husband Peter's Lawyer of the Year award from the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, at 11 Downing Street

Crusader for human rights

Peter Duffy, QC, who died of cancer last month at the age of 44, never sought recognition for himself; he was more concerned about winning it for others. So it is not surprising that, in the recent batch of awards for human rights work, it was he who had nominated the winners. The full recognition he so much deserved was finally forthcoming when — on the strength of a host of nominations — he was named last week as *The Times*/Justice Lawyer of the Year.

Anne Owens, the director of Justice, who presented the award to Duffy's wife Vivienne, and daughters Clare, Helen and Sarah at a reception at 11 Downing Street, said his death was a huge loss to the UK legal community. Most of his cases were milestones in human rights: Gypsies, asylum-seekers, gay rights, Diane Blood and the Pinochet appeal in which he appeared for Amnesty International. He died before judgment was given.

Ms Owens paid tribute to Mr Duffy's talent for translating dry legal instructions into an argument that captured the inherent unfair-

Peter Duffy has finally won the kind of recognition he so often sought for others, says Frances Gibb

TIMES/JUSTICE LAW AWARDS

ness in a case and which could appeal to a judge's sense of justice; for his support of young lawyers, and "abiding dislike" of discrimination against minorities and the vulnerable. "Tragically, he will not be there to argue a case on day one of the Human Rights Act," she said.

The judging panel — which included Lord Woolf, the Master of the Rolls; Robert Ayling, the chairman of British Airways; the MP Chris Mullin; and Ms Owens — also decided that a special award should go to another lawyer, Rosemary Nelson, who was murdered in Belfast in March.

In nominating her, the Belfast-based Committee on the Administration of Justice stated that she represented the "very best of the legal profession, defending her clients, regardless of their alleged crimes and to the very best of her ability". That

commitment had led directly to her murder, the nomination said. "It would have been safer to stick to non-controversial cases and to pick and choose who came to her for help," it added, "but that was not Nelson's concept of justice."

A United Nations principle states that lawyers should not be identified with their clients or their clients' causes as a result of discharging their functions. The committee said: "Rosemary Nelson paid the highest possible price when this principle was disregarded; lawyers must honour her memory."

The Young Lawyer of the Year award went jointly to Saal Leiffré and Farvaiz Jabbar, who have worked at Simons Muirhead & Burton for many years on death

barriers they briefed. They had impressive results, winning many appeals and frequently saving lives, he said.

The award for the organisation that had done the most to widen access to justice went to the Environmental Law Foundation. It has helped community groups and individuals in more than 800 cases, using a network of lawyers working largely for free.

The foundation, chaired by Martin Polden and run by Maria Adebowale, is the only national charity providing local sources of expertise on the environment. It plans to set up a chain of "surgeries" throughout the country.

Mr Fitzgerald added that despite working against the clock and with the ever-present threat of execution hanging over their clients, they were always positive, inspiring all

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Firms make a hasty retreat from war zone

Lawyers are casualties of the Balkans crisis. Edward Fennell reports

Western lawyers do not come high on the list of casualties of the Nato war in Yugoslavia — but in a business sense they are in there somewhere. The law firm with the most to lose is probably the City solicitors Denton Hall. Mark Harrison, a former Eversheds lawyer, has been in Belgrade working for the Serbian and Macedonian Governments on privatisation and regulation.

Will Hulbert, a spokesman for the firm, said this week that such work had been "put on hold". Mr Harrison has left Belgrade. Interviewed in Sofia last week, he was understandably cagey about the work he has been doing for the Serbs. Mr Hulbert said that the firm was "playing its cards close to its chest", although Elizabeth Rantzen, its business development manager, admitted that Mr Harrison and Blanche Sas (an expert on pipeline deals), of the firm's Brussels office, were "very close to the Establishment" in Belgrade.

Denton Hall is not alone in its interest in the Balkans. In 1996, when Eversheds still employed Mr Harrison, the firm joined a trade delegation to Serbia to look for investment opportunities. Mr Harrison said at the time that he expected Eversheds to play a big part in the reconstruction process and spoke enthusiastically about the potential of Montenegro's tourism industry. Now those views look like wishful thinking. Even so, Mr Harrison persisted with his ambitions for work in Yugoslavia. Eversheds management, however, did not share his vision and he joined Denton Hall.

Eversheds, though, has not entirely abandoned interest in the area. The firm has just appoint-

ed Francis Chubb, a former army officer who has worked with Nato's forces in Bosnia, to join the offices of Georgiev Todorov & Co, the Sofia firm with which it has an exclusive relationship. According to Alan Jenkins, who masterminded the Eversheds international policy, this is a first step towards a possible office in the country. Mr Chubb and Mr Harrison may, with any luck, have the opportunity of enjoying Sofia's nightlife together. Bulgaria, like Hungary and Romania, is under EU pressure to cut fuel supply lines to Yugoslavia. As potential EU members, the "frontline states" are expected to conform to new European legislation being enacted this week.

Istvan Recicza, a lawyer with White & Case in Budapest, said last week that Hungary's recent accession to Nato has given assurance to Western investors that they will be safe, no matter what happens over the border. White & Case is acting for the Hungarian Government over the licensing of a new mobile phone service. Mr Recicza says: "We have been astonished by the quality and scale of the bids. BT, Orange, Telecom Italia and many other leading companies want to invest in the project and seem undeterred by developments in Yugoslavia."

So despite the war, business goes on. Michael Dark, who runs Taylor Joynson Garrett's Bucharest office, reports that one of his transactions has fallen through because of the problems on the Danube. "But aside from that, we have not been affected," he says. "Local business people, however, tell me that the war is costing Romania millions of dollars in lost business; and that is likely to create a terrible insurance mess."

Company Secretary

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Bedford & Merseyside

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For further information, in complete confidence, please contact Sarah David, Greg Abrahamson or Nick Shilton (all qualified lawyers) on 0171 430 6082 (0181 562 0723 or 0171 430 4983 evenings/weekends) or write to them at QD Legal.

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- Opportunity to be involved in advising on strategic remuneration matters.

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- Candidates will be qualified lawyers with 3-8 years post-qualification experience from either a professional or consultancy background.
- Ideally, experience of evaluating and advising on a wide range of share scheme matters. It would also be advantageous if candidates have experience of either pensions or employment law.
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Closing date: Monday 10th May 1999.

Coote to benefit from Irish exodus

By GEORGE CAULKIN

A VERY fine line separates bold experimentation from complete exasperation and the Northern Ireland manager, Lawrie McMenemy, has taken a large stride over it. With 11 players withdrawing from the international against Canada at Windsor Park tonight, much scope for manoeuvre has already been curtailed. As a matter of urgency, would any fit male contact the Irish Football Association.

James Quinn, the West Bromwich Albion striker, became the eighth member of McMenemy's full squad to send his apologies yesterday, joining the ailing Keith Gillespie, Neil Lennon, Damien Johnson, Steve Morrow and Alan Pettis. Stephen Robinson and Peter Kennedy have been allowed to remain with their clubs, while three players have stood down from the stand-by list.

As a consequence, a brave face and a fresh face were revealed by McMenemy yesterday, both designed to deflect concern over a Euro 2000 qualifying campaign that has descended into farce. A combination of Quinn's absence and a dearth of goals — three in the past five games — ensure a nervous attacking partnership. Adrian Coote, of Norwich City, a recent graduate from the under-21 team, makes his debut alongside the lingering Iain Dowie.

"We all know that we need goals," McMenemy said. "I want to see how people like Adrian Coote react to the bigger stage. I want to see if there are any positives from him that might help us in our three remaining games."

The Reading defender, Barry Hunter, returns to international football after a sapping two-year battle against injury. The contrast with Canada, ranked 92nd in the world, could not be more striking. While their coach, Holger Osieck, was able to select a young, 18-man squad — the majority of whom are based in England, Scotland or Ireland — only Carlo Corazzin, of Northampton Town, is absent with injury.

NORTHERN IRELAND (possible, 4-4-2): M Taylor (Fulham) — D Patterson (Durham), M Williams (Chesterfield), B de Vries (Luton), K Hordley (Sheff Wed), D Bormer (Sheff Wed), S Lomas (West Ham), P McNamee (Norwich), J McQuinn (Reading), A Coote (Norwich). **CANADA (possible, 4-4-2):** C Forrest (West Ham), M Wilson (Oxford), J McKinnon (Middlesbrough), B de Vries (Luton), S Lomas (West Ham), P McNamee (Norwich), J McQuinn (Reading), A Coote (Norwich).

PFA Player of the Year holds award in high regard, says Matt Dickinson

Ginola humbled by his honour

Flying back into Paris on holiday recently, David Ginola was greeted by a porter. "So what," the man inquired, "are you up to now you've retired from football?" He will get his answer this morning when he sees Ginola, dressed in a tuxedo and wearing a look of vindication, draped across his morning paper.

A mobbing by journalists from France came quickly yesterday on the back of Ginola's success in being voted the Professional Footballers' Association Player of the Year.

A less charming and media-aware person than the Tottenham Hotspur winger might have told him all to disappear back down the Channel Tunnel. After all, the press have hardly been waging a campaign for him to be restored to the national team since his exile began in 1993.

The opportunity to re-establish himself in his home country was too good to miss, however, so the 32-year-old sat and talked, although only, of course, after George Graham had allowed him to leave training. Player of the Year or not, no one slacks when Graham is their manager.

Even a man as accustomed to the glare of television cameras, studio lights and flashbulbs seemed somewhat overwhelmed by the avalanche of interest yesterday. "It is a great honour," he kept repeating, but what soon became obvious was that the recognition of his fellow players, as opposed to that of the media, had genuinely touched him.

Not because he has anything against the written press, but because it shattered the notion that he was regarded within football as a bit of a foreign sissy, a skilful player who could not cope with being kicked in the air, a man too worried about his hair to throw himself into tackles.

The attacks came most notably during Tottenham's long-running battles with Wimbledon this season, when Joe Kinnear, the Wimbledon manager, repeatedly accused Ginola of diving.

Only this Saturday, the Frenchman was suffering more gibes when Steve Lomas mocked the Spurs players for trying to start a fight. "Half of them would have bottled out anyway," the West Ham United player said, and it was clear which half he thought Ginola fell into.

But far from becoming embittered by the provocation, Ginola has been spurred into some of the best performances of his career and will figure more than once in the shortlist for goal of the season. His performance in the Worthington Cup final was far from memorable, but in distracting two Leicester City players, he stuck to his task. He has pleased Graham and there are few harder tasks than that.



Morning glory: Ginola lets his team-mates know who is No 1 as he arrives at Tottenham Hotspur's training ground in Chigwell yesterday, after claiming the PFA Footballer of the Year award the previous night. Photograph: Max Nash

formance in the Worthington Cup final was far from memorable, but in distracting two Leicester City players, he stuck to his task. He has pleased Graham and there are few harder tasks than that.

"Everyone loves controversy, so they talk about an incident like Saturday," Ginola said. "But they do not notice that Moncur also said I was a great player. I am sure even players from Wimbledon voted for me. That is why this award means so much because it has come from the players."

"With journalists, you do interviews with them, you get to know them, so it is maybe not so impartial. But with the players, they vote from all the divisions so they don't know me. They have either voted for me because they have played against me, or just because they have seen me on the televi-

sion. That gives me a really great feeling."

PFA AWARDS

PLAYER OF THE YEAR

D Ginola (Tottenham Hotspur)
Runner-up: D Yorke (Manchester United),
T. E. Felt (Aston Villa), A. Shearer (Newcastle),
D. Beckham (Manchester United),
D. Bergkamp (Arsenal), R. Keane (Manchester United)

YOUNG PLAYER OF THE YEAR

N Anelka (Arsenal)
Runner-up: M Owen (Liverpool), T. H. H. (Leeds United), A. Shearer (Newcastle),
D. Bergkamp (Arsenal), L. Hendrie (Aston Villa), A. Smith (Leeds United)

DIVISIONAL TEAMS

Premiership: N. Martin (Leeds United),
G. Neville (Manchester United), D. P. (Manchester United), P. V. (Arsenal), S. Campbell (Tottenham Hotspur), S. G. (Manchester United), D. Beckham (Manchester United), D. Yorke (Manchester United), N. Anelka (Arsenal), E. Felt (Aston Villa), D. Ginola (Tottenham Hotspur)

First Division: R. Wright (Preston North End), G. Rowett (Birmingham City), M. Gray (Sunderland), K. Dyer (Preston North End), S. (Sunderland), M. V. (Sunderland), T. (Sunderland), D. Moore (Bradford City), P. (Bolton Wanderers), L. Clark (Sunderland), P. (Bolton Wanderers), M. (Bolton Wanderers), N. (Bolton Wanderers), A. (Bolton Wanderers)

Second Division: M. Taylor (Fulham), S. (Fulham), R. (Fulham), J. (Fulham), J. (Fulham), N. (Fulham), S. (Fulham), C. (Fulham), G. (Fulham), K. (Fulham), D. (Fulham), M. (Fulham), M. (Fulham), S. (Fulham)

Third Division: J. (Cardiff City), P. (Cardiff City), P. (Cardiff City), C. (Cardiff City), C. (Cardiff City), J. (Cardiff City), J. (Cardiff City), J. (Cardiff City), J. (Cardiff City), J. (Cardiff City), J. (Cardiff City), J. (Cardiff City), J. (Cardiff City)

tion. That gives me a really great feeling."

It is not the first time that Ginola has won such an award. He won the equivalent in France when he was with Paris Saint-Germain in 1993-94 and received an honour arguably as great as any this season when Johan Cruyff declared him the best player in the world.

As well as the self-promotion that will come with the trophy, and a possible pay rise from his many sponsors, Ginola will be able to use the publicity to project the charitable causes for which he works. As an ambassador for the Red Cross, campaigning against landmines, he is helping to set up a match at White Hart Lane on May 19 to raise money for Kosovo refugees.

He will also hope that it helps his own cause when it comes to sitting down with his main employers this summer and negotiating a new contract. He has two years left on his present deal and likes London enough after the "small village mentality" of Newcastle to seek an extension.

"I am not certain I am wanted, then I will go straight away," he said in an interview recently. His fellow professionals have declared their feelings. Now it is up to Graham and Alan Sugar to do the same.

Injuries haunt Brown's build-up

By KEVIN MCCARRA

WHAT benefit can Scotland gain from the match with Germany in Bremen tomorrow? "We hope to prove the strength in depth of our squad," Craig Brown, the manager, said. Given his choice of reactions, he preferred to be wry. The alternative would have been exasperation. It is normal for Scotland to find their possibilities whittled away, but the present circumstances threaten to reduce them to sawdust.

When naming his party an entire possible team, with a couple of substitutes to spare, was unavailable through injury. Now, the survivors are being picked off. Craig Burley, Matt Elliott, David Hopkin, Neil McCann and Jackie McNamara did not survive the weekend matches for their clubs and all withdrew yesterday. Plausible replacements are as scarce as men in husky health and Brown made just one addition to the squad.

The eligibility of Colin Cameron, of Heart of Midlothian, may owe something to the fact that he has only lately returned after missing most of this season with a persistent pelvic strain.

The ministrations of a French osteopath brought about his recovery, but the midfielder player had not expected promotion to his country's colours and is at present without his passport. It has been submitted with an application for the visa that he will need to visit in-laws in the Middle East this summer. In addition to collecting his boots from Newcastle, he also had to acquire a temporary passport yesterday morning.

It is Brown's intention to keep a core of experience in the team and, where the starting line-up is concerned, he will limit the number of experiments. Neither of the uncapped goalkeepers, Alan Main and Robert Douglas, is expected to make his debut since Brown feels that Neil Sullivan would benefit from a prolonged, hair-raising exposure to the Germans.

There are, however, certain changes that the manager is bound to make. Last month, Scotland lost a European championship qualifying tie to the Czech Republic, their first defeat at home in a championship match since 1987. The status quo cannot survive untouched in such circumstances.

Tomorrow, Brown will give Don Hutchison, of Everton, his first full appearance for Scotland, as a forward.

Umbro takeover puts cloud over £15m Shearer deal

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

A TAKEOVER of Umbro, the sports manufacturer, has placed a question mark over the Manchester-based company's multimillion-pound boot and clothing deals with Alan Shearer and Michael Owen, which were signed only last year. Advisers acting for both players are understood to be seeking clarification over the buyout.

After months of speculation over its future and a financial restructuring, Umbro confirmed yesterday that it had been bought for £90 million by Doughty Hanson, an independent fund management company. The new owner is expected to continue to develop Umbro as a football brand.

Shearer, the Newcastle United and England captain, still has another 13 years left to run on his deal, which was agreed last season for £15 million, while Owen, the Liverpool

striker, has a five-year deal worth £5 million, but both are believed to want to talk to the new owner because of concerns over changing personnel. In signing for Umbro, the pair rejected bigger financial offers from Nike and Adidas, among others, who will monitor the situation closely.

The takeover is not expected to affect Umbro's £50 million five-year agreement with the Football Association to provide the England kit, or their similar relationship with Manchester United. Staff at Umbro have yet to be told if they are to maintain their positions but the new management will include Peter McGuigan, a former president of Reebok, Mark Corbridge, former financial director of Newcastle United, and Chris Ronnie, who previously worked for Diadora.

Mick McCarthy, the Ireland manager, will have to make do without Roy Keane and several other key personnel for the international against Sweden in Dublin tomorrow.

McCarthy still does not know if there is anything worth making plans for, in any case, as Uefa has formed a task force to deal with the impact of conflict in Serbia on the European championship. Uefa has told the Football Association of Ireland that it will not make a ruling until May 11 on the fate of the group eight qualifying games against Yugoslavia and Macedonia, both scheduled to take place in Dublin in early June.

McCarthy and his squad have no option but to get on with preparations for something that may not even happen. The manager admitted: "We just don't know what is going to happen in June."

Football in Brief Richards takes office

■ DAVE RICHARDS, the Sheffield Wednesday chairman, was installed as the chairman of the FA Premier League yesterday. His appointment came after a meeting of the chairmen from the Premier League's 20 clubs. Richards had been acting chairman since the enforced resignations of Sir John Quinton, the former chairman, and Peter Leaver, the former chief executive, who left after agreeing a deal concerning television rights without the consultation of the clubs.

■ Newcastle United are vying with Middlesbrough for the signature of Oleg Luzhny, the Dynamo Kiev defender. A Newcastle delegation, including Ruud Gullit, the manager, was in London yesterday negotiating personal terms with the Ukraine captain.

Luzhny has already spoken to Bryan Robson, the Middlesbrough manager, about a possible move.

■ Liverpool have initiated moves to bring Vladimir Smicer, the Czech Republic international, to Anfield. Gérard Houllier, the Liverpool manager, has targeted Smicer, who plays for Lens, as a replacement for Steve McManaman, who will join Real Madrid at the end of the season.

■ Mike Dean, the referee, has reported Bristol City to the Football Association after the violent scenes that marked the end of their Nationwide League first division home defeat by Birmingham City on Saturday. Dean claims that both he and his two assistants were hit by coins thrown from the home fans' end as they left the pitch.

Success of Jeffers provides incentive for latest crop

By NICK SZCZEPANIK

LAST season Francis Jeffers played in the Everton team that won The Times FA Youth Cup, beating Blackburn Rovers in the two-leg final. Today he is in Hungary with the full England squad. Tonight four teams will contest the second legs of the Youth Cup semi-finals and their players will be dreaming of following Jeffers' lead.

One player who would appear to have a good chance of emulating Jeffers one day is Gary McSheffrey, of Coventry City, who play Newcastle United at Highfield Road tonight. In the first leg at St James' Park last week, McSheffrey, 16, who lives locally, scored a hat-trick as Coventry beat the home side 4-0.

"He's one of those boys who can catch fire at any moment



and fortunately he did in the first leg," Richard Money, Coventry's academy director, said. The fourth was scored by Craig Strachan, son of the City manager, Gordon.

Twelve months ago Jeffers had already made an appearance as a substitute in the FA Carling Premiership. McSheffrey has been on the fringe of Strachan's first-team squad, along with Chris Kirkland and Gerry Mooney, who both missed the first leg but are in the reckoning for the game, which will be a formality, surely.

"We have to make sure we approach the game in the right manner," Money said.

"Football has a nasty habit of kicking you in the teeth." That would be some kick for a team holding a four-goal advantage. "We were delighted. It was much more than we expected, but as the game went on, we deserved it."

The other likely finalists are West Ham United, who take a 3-0 lead over Everton to Goodison Park tonight. The scores in the first leg at Upton Park included two graduates of their Australian academies, Michael Ferrante and Richard Garcia, while Joe Cole, who is widely regarded as the most promising teenager in the country, has played several first-team games.

"I've seen West Ham a couple of times, and we've had Everton watched," Money said, showing how seriously clubs take this competition. "We think they're both good teams."

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MOVIES

THE TIMES



RUGBY LEAGUE 49

Broncos' owner hopes to buck trend at Wembley

SPORT

TUESDAY APRIL 27 1999

MOTOR RACING 50

Alexander the great leaves Benetton with weighty problem



Players expected to agree to donate fees from match against Hungary to Kosovan refugees

Keegan asks England to dig deep

FROM OLIVER HOLT, FOOTBALL CORRESPONDENT, IN BUDAPEST

THE Danube was looking a dirty shade of green yesterday, so it seemed fitting that the England squad should arrive here feeling blue. Depleted beyond measure and nervous because of the proximity of war-torn Yugoslavia, it was left to Kevin Keegan to try to accentuate the positives of a trip that is flirting with farce. He made a good start.

Wearing his heart on his sleeve as usual, the England caretaker manager suggested that the country's pampered footballers should look at the bigger picture and donate part of their match fee for the international against Hungary tomorrow night to Kosovan refugees.

It might only be a gesture, but it would be a beginning, a guarantee that whatever else happened in the run-up to a troubled fixture that nobody seems to want, England could at least go home with something to be proud of.

Match fees are not yet as inflated as the players' salaries and are calculated on a sliding scale that takes account of experience and participation in the match. It is still thought that the total given to charity may amount to £30,000. Keegan's urgings are almost certain to be ratified by the players' committee this morning.

"It is just something I believe we should do," Keegan said, "a gesture to show that we care. We are entering into an area and there is a war going on next door. This is definitely something that the England football team needs to do and I will seek out Alan Shearer and the other senior players to discuss it with them."

This, of course, is Keegan's forte, the ability to turn bad into good, to sense what is the best thing to do in an emotive situation, to avoid being niggardly. He eschews circumspection and compromise and thrives on spontaneity. In this situation, he

is exactly what his green-gilled squad needs. Most of all, he insisted yesterday that the match tomorrow was brimming with opportunities for the young players, who have inherited their places in the squad because of the mass withdrawals that have given it such an unfamiliar, inexperienced look. Added to the six players who pulled out because of assorted injuries over the weekend, Manchester United and Arsenal had already been allowed to declare David Beckham, Gary Neville, Ray Parlour and Tony Adams unavailable.

All that means that there will be new caps tomorrow. Keegan said that he would announce the team after training this morning and that his side would include at least two "youngsters". Either Kevin Phillips, the Sunderland striker, or Emile Heskey, of Leicester City, will start alongside Shearer.

Michael Gray may play on the left side of defence and if Francis Jeffers, the precocious Everton forward, gets a taste of the action he will become the second-youngest player this century to appear for England.



Keegan: in positive mood

That was Keegan's thrust: the fact that an innocuous match against a once mighty team that has taken its place among the also-rans of Europe could provide a springboard for a young player who might not otherwise have had the chance. He did not snipe at the respective club managers for withdrawing their players.

"Every manager has played ball with me," he said. "They have all asked whether they wanted the injured player to come down for a medical, but what is the point of asking someone to sit in a car for seven hours just so I can prove what his manager has already told me? I don't see the worth in antagonising managers. We have to work in tandem for the good of the league and for the England national team."

Keegan, though, was keen to express admiration and empathy

for those such as Shearer, who were desperate to play for their country whatever the occasion. "We will still have the nucleus of a good team," Keegan said, "and now it will be sprinkled with a bit of stardust. We will still take something from this game. A few of these young players are going to get on the plane home as full internationals."

"They could make a fantastic impression, others may turn in a performance where they don't let themselves down, others may offer signs it has come too quickly for them. That's down to them, not me. I can only provide them with the chance."

Certain withdrawals have been a blow to us, but we go, we play and we will send out a team with plenty of youth and enthusiasm. Alan Shearer is captain and he will respond to that, but I am more interested in how the young player making his debut up front alongside him responds to playing with

Alan. The presence of the captain is important, but it was never in any doubt. Alan is not a prima donna. He wants to play in every game and I can relate to that.

"When Don Revie was in charge and we were due to go to Ireland for a friendly, he asked me if I wanted a couple of days at home with

Ginola's French polish.....48
Injuries trouble Scots.....48
McMenamy calls on Coote.....48
Fantasy Football.....24

my family. I asked him: 'What are you trying to say?' and he explained there had been a death threat against the team from some crank. "I told him I wanted to play, to get me on the plane. It was an England game. Yes, some games are bigger than others at this level, but you have got to have the right attitude for every England match."



A solitary policeman patrols the outfield in Bridgetown. The players had already left the field when bottles were thrown after a controversial run-out. Photograph: David Gray

Forest puzzle as Evans denies applying for job

BY STEPHEN WOOD

NOTTINGHAM Forest yesterday confirmed that Roy Evans, the former Liverpool manager, was one of "three or four" candidates hoping to become the next manager at the City Ground. Last night, however, Evans insisted that he had not shown any interest in the post.

Forest, who were relegated from the FA Carling Premiership after their defeat away to Aston Villa last weekend, need to make a new managerial appointment this summer. Ron Atkinson, the present manager, announced his retirement last Saturday, to take effect from the end of the season. Yesterday lunchtime a spokesman for Forest indicated that Evans could become Atkinson's successor and the club's fourth manager since Brian Clough ended his 18-year reign in 1993.

"Roy is in the frame for the job and is one of three or four candidates," the club spokesman said. Evans, who was believed to have applied for the vacancy in January this year after Dave Bassett, Atkinson's predecessor, was sacked, initially refused to comment

but, later yesterday, denied that he had sent an application to Forest. However, Evans has been looking to return to management since he left his job as the joint-manager of Liverpool last November.

Evans was a candidate to fill the manager's vacancy at Blackburn Rovers, which went to Brian Kidd, but even if he does not put himself forward for the Forest post, there are other candidates to take control of the team in the Nationwide League first division next season.

Sammy Mellroy, the Macclesfield manager, is under consideration after taking the Moss Rose club from non-league football to the second division. David Moyes, the Preston North End manager, is another contender, while there are suggestions that Forest could opt for a managerial combination of Stuart Pearce and Nigel Clough, two of their former players.

Pearce is still on the playing staff of Newcastle United, while Clough is player-manager of Burton Albion, the Dr Martens League club.

World Cup organisers have faith in security

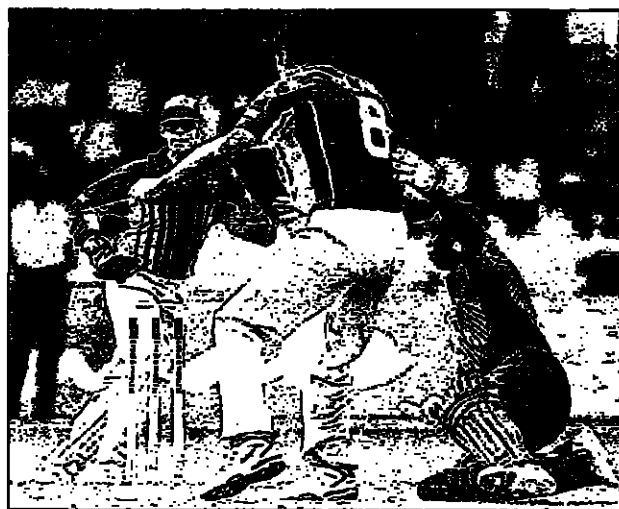
BY RICHARD HOBSON

SECURITY measures due to be implemented for the cricket World Cup will not be tightened in response to crowd trouble in the Caribbean. Michael Browning, the event manager, said that plans already in place will prevent a repeat of the frightening scenes in Guyana and Barbados over the past week that tarnished the one-day series between West Indies and Australia.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) is awaiting reports from Raman Subba Row, the match referee, but has already pledged to investigate disturbances that threatened the safety of players. Even John Howard, the Prime Minister of Australia, felt compelled to join a chorus of condemnation yesterday.

Steve Waugh described as "pure luck" the fact that no one was seriously injured when bottles rained on to the outfield in the latest incident in Bridgetown on Sunday night. "It is only a matter of time before somebody is killed," the Australia captain said. "You cannot risk blokes' safety for a game of cricket."

Organisers of the World Cup have held regular meetings over the past two years with the Association of Chief Police Officers and equivalent organisations in Scotland,



Campbell is run out after colliding with Julian in the moment that sparked the latest crowd disturbances

Ireland and Holland, where a total of four matches are scheduled.

"We have planned for every contingency," Browning said. "As new issues come to our attention, we are prepared to take them into consideration, but so far nothing has happened that we have not thought about and discussed previously."

The latest episodes follow scenes in Calcutta two months ago when 50,000 spectators had to be evacuated from Eden Gardens before a Test match between India and

suggested that it would be more constructive to implement measures to prevent problems arising at source.

Difficulties arose in Barbados when Sherwin Campbell, playing on his home ground, was run out after colliding with Brendon Julian, the Australia bowler. The touring side, however, are more concerned with a pitch invasion in Guyana five days earlier, when Subba Row had to adjudicate the match as a tie.

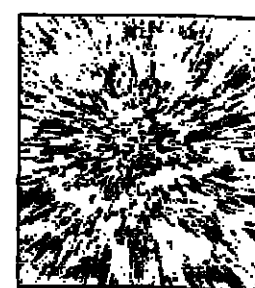
Michael Hogan, a spokesman for the Australia Cricket Board, said: "We will not be going to Guyana again unless things change. Barbados is not quite the same situation as the Bajans are very enthusiastic and easy-going cricket lovers." Sources in Guyana have suggested that problems materialised because demand for tickets outstripped supply.

Tim May, the president of the Australia Cricketers' Association, said that grounds failing to meet required standards should be stripped of matches and that venues should be rated with a risk factor. "It is not just confined to the West Indies," May said. "India has problems and we have a problem [in Australia] with golf balls being thrown, while I have played in New Zealand when there has been trouble."

Although the ICC chief executive, said, "What has happened is unacceptable." Although the ICC is empowered to suspend international cricket at any venue, Richards

Students given six pack

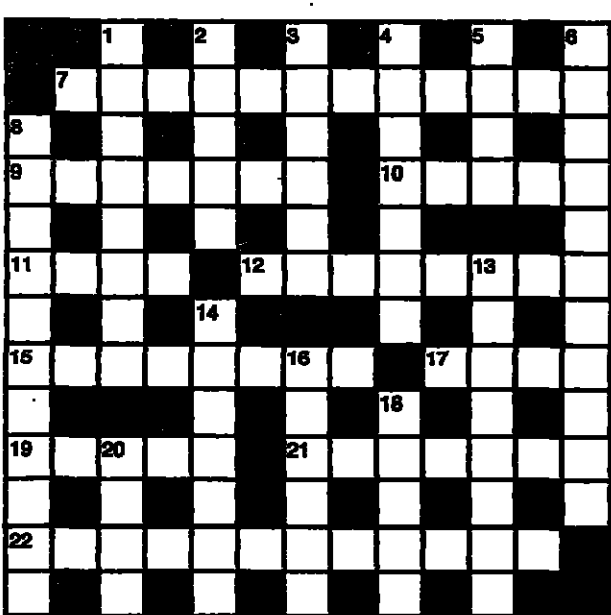
THE England and Wales Cricket Board announced six University Centres of Cricketing Excellence yesterday (Richard Hobson writes). Oxford Brookes University, the former polytechnic, featured in the Oxford bid, while Cambridge applied jointly with the Anglia Polytechnic University, Durham and Loughborough have also been chosen, plus a cluster of universities from Bradford and Leeds and a grouping from Wales. They will compete in a round-robin, two-day championship and play three matches each against first-class counties, which represents a cutback in fixtures against first-class opposition for Oxford and Cambridge.



THE END OF A LONG RUN

The last of the 30,508 finishers in the 1999 Flora London Marathon, a results listing exclusive to The Times, breaks the tape on page 25

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD



No 1702

ACROSS

- 7 Concede to majority (4,4,4)
9 Powerful, fervent (7)
10 Long narrow top (5)
11 Drink carrier: sounds like feature (4)
12 Sunken continent (8)
15 Deep (ice) fissure (8)
17 Ring of light (4)
19 To deposit: gatehouse (5)
21 Loss of memory (7)
22 Hurry up! (slang) (4,2,6)

DOWN

- 1 Phoenician city, Rome rival (8)
2 Side (of animal, army) (5)
3 Swamp damagingly in (6)
4 Diary, magazine (7)
5 Intelligence object to (4)
6 Final eg hymn: Kipling poem (11)
8 Subversive group (5,6)
13 Wing of church (8)
14 Athlete's spear (7)
16 Thinly scattered (6)
18 Relative by marriage (2,3)
20 Embankment; ditch (4)

SOLUTION TO NO 1701

- ACROSS: 1 Shaft 7 Hallway 8 Barrage 9 Twinkle
11 Rapier 13 Languor/doc 15 Crow's feet 19 Robust
21 Quarrel 23 Impulse 24 Cheerio 25 Rufus
DOWN: 1 Sober 2 Abrupt 3 Travel 4 Whet 5 Plunge
6 Balloon 10 Wagner 12 Raffle 14 Fraught 16 Warder
17 Torpor 18 Put off 20 Teens 22 Lion

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